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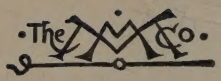
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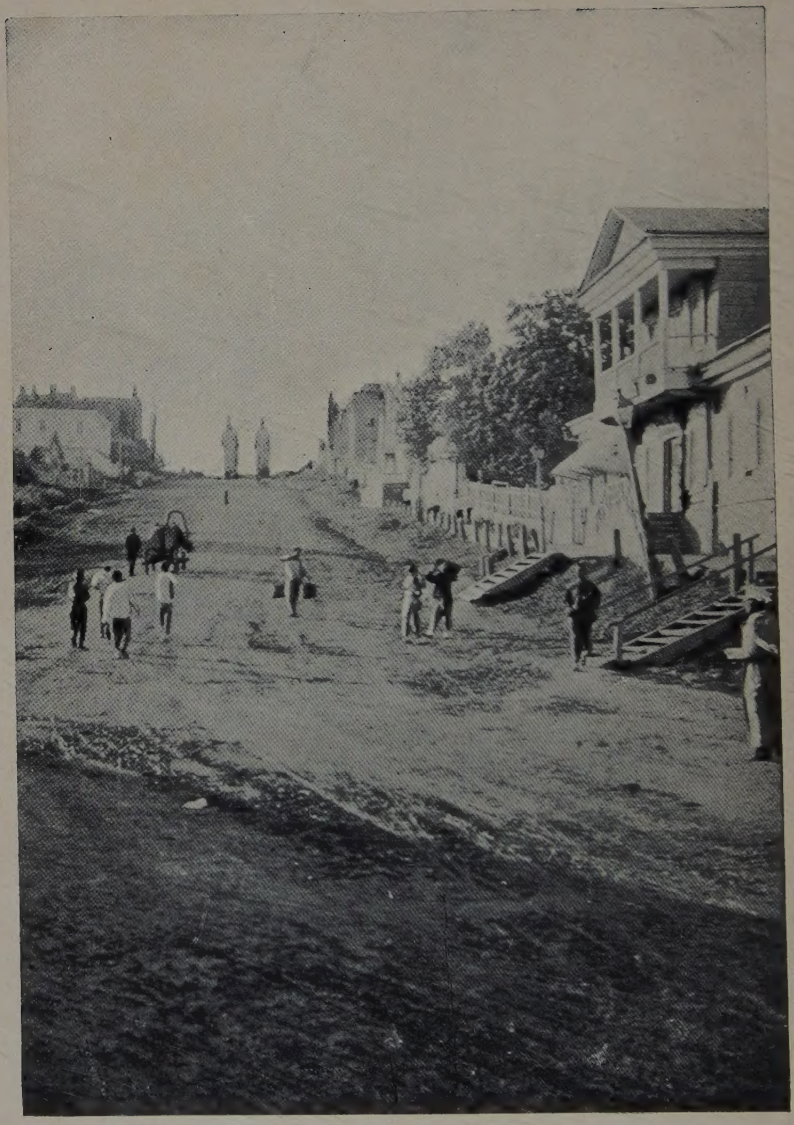

KHABAROVSK, THE CAPITAL OF GREATER RUSSIA

GREATER RUSSIA

THE CONTINENTAL EMPIRE OF THE OLD WORLD

BY

WIRT GERRARE

AUTHOR OF "THE STORY OF MOSCOW," ETC., ETC.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS AND A MAP

New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.

1904

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Set up, electrotyped, and published January, 1903. Reprinted March, 1904.

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith Co.
Norwood, Mass., U.S.A.

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PREFACE

MANY books have been written on Russia and its people. The reason that the number is again increased is due to the fact that Russia is developing more rapidly than any other nation, and that Siberia is very different from the inert, barren, dismal country conventionally described. The outward changes are numerous and easily recognised by one who remembers Russia as it was under the rule of Alexander II., the Great Tsar Liberator. Nor is it difficult to describe the altered conditions, and explain some of the processes by which the transformation has been effected.

There has been a great awakening of Russia. The people, debarred generally from active participation in politics, have directed their energies towards the commercial and industrial exploitation of their native land. They are active, strenuous, and persevering; they have advanced in civilisation as well as increased their wealth and power. By territorial expansion Russia has taken a long stride forward towards the attainment of world supremacy, and boasts that the step is but the beginning of her progress towards the realisation of her manifest destiny.

This is the greater Russia to which the attention of the reader is invited. For obvious reasons this treatise does not even pretend to present a complete picture of such an immense continental empire, still less to give an exhaustive account of its resources, a full description of its natural features,

or minute explanation of the home and foreign policy of its government. Its object is to convey an adequate idea of Russia's advance: her industrial progress, commercial prospects, the openings presented for both capital and labour, the markets closed to foreign enterprise. In order to accomplish this it has been needful to describe the present condition of Russians as agriculturists and artisans in Europe and as colonists in Asia; to write of the men who are creating wealth and the means they employ, of the laws and the officials who administer them, of the aims of the Russian State in so far as they are revealed by what has been already accomplished. Some purely historical, topographical, and statistical details have been inserted, because without them the real indication of certain recorded facts might not be understood by those to whom Russia is unknown. Otherwise the contents of the book are the result of actual observation made during different visits, but mainly whilst twice crossing the empire in 1901.

Instead of merely recording impressions, I have used the facts collected to form a basis for suggestive comment, and at the risk of being thought flippant have preferred anecdote to verbal description in conveying an idea of the habits and customs of the different classes of people with whom a traveller comes in contact. An objection to this plan is that from a single concrete instance one is prone to generalise; another, that greater prominence is given to unimportant occurrences than the circumstances warrant; and so a false value is unconsciously attached to some trifling incident. It is unnecessary to warn readers that an isolated example does not constitute a rule, and if I have reported matters which apparently might have been omitted with advantage, it is not that I bear any official a grudge or lack generosity, but am anxious only to create a true impression. In all I have been

content to represent whatever came to my notice, without exaggeration and, as far as possible, without bias.

The future of Russia in Asia is of far greater importance than its prisons to the world generally. Of them we all know already far more than of the country itself, of its natives, its great towns, long rivers, immense fairs, varied produce, and unexploited resources.

In the Far East there is a serious problem awaiting solution. The Russia that opened a window on to Europe was quite unlike that which made a port-hole on to the Pacific to afford egress for itself, but closes with a snap against the entrance of foreigners and their merchandise.

East of Baikal is Russia's greater and better half, because that land has been influenced from the West by way of the cosmopolitan Far East. It is there that Russia is most jealous of foreigners; it is of that territory the Anglo-Saxons know so little. It was there that I discovered that Englishmen, however Russophile they may have shown themselves, were denied privileges granted readily to foreigners of any other nationality, and were rigorously excluded by Russia from Manchuria — a country to which she now professes to make no claim. Denied legalised access to the territory I entered it in disguise, and was thus precluded from obtaining information from the usual official sources. Whether or not what I did succeed in getting was worth the trouble of collecting my readers must judge.

I am conscious that a more successful book of reference than this is could be compiled on the subject of GREATER RUSSIA, for I have drawn mostly from my own limited experience, and that of persons whom I met. Perhaps this attempt to supply information will induce other writers to make complete studies of an accessible country and its interesting inhabitants of whom we ought to know more.

In order to facilitate reference the rule of the British War Office and Bædeker's Guide has been followed for the transliteration of place names, and I have further to acknowledge my indebtedness to Russian officials and others for the aid they have afforded me in securing information, and many kindnesses extended to me during my journeys.

AUTHORS' CLUB
LONDON, S.W.
December 31, 1902

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CHAPTER I

THE AWAKENING OF RUSSIA

TO-DAY an increasing interest is taken in Russia and its people. It is coming to be believed that the country and race are other than they have been represented by conventional novelists and travellers, and that Russian politics have not been properly understood by foreign statesmen. There are many Russias, but that which is most widely known existed only in the imagination of the romancist, or appeared as a distorted picture seen through political glasses. When, on fuller acquaintance, we find a Russia other than we expected, we are again apt to suppose that Russia has changed, whereas much that now appears different is due only to a change in the point of view.

It is difficult to obtain an adequate idea of the Russian Empire, comprising a territory of some forty times greater area than England, all within a ring fence and, if not correctly described as one country, yet practically undivided by any physical barrier. Geographically Russia-in-Europe is separated from Russia-in-Asia by the Ural Mountains and the Caspian Sea. The Urals are low hills forming the backbone of the empire, and have practically the same climate, fauna, flora, and soil on both the eastern and western slopes, and much of the Russia west of the range more closely resembles the Asiatic plateau than it does the remainder of Europe.

Geologically it is Baikal — the lake and volcanic range — which divides Russia, and zoologically it is the valley of the

Irtish in West Siberia. Flatness characterises the country, and whether in Europe or Asia the central zone consists of large tracts of forest and marsh which terminate with frozen wastes in the arctic circle on the north, and on the south change to rough prairie lands which merge with arid sandy plains. Throughout, the climate is more intense than in Europe: in summer the weather is hotter, and in winter colder than at corresponding latitudes in the west; there is also a greater range of temperature between day and night.

The division into Government districts is purely artificial and arbitrary, the result of political expediency at different periods. Although under the rule of an absolute monarch, and everywhere governed by Russians, the empire is peopled by many different races, and in the European territory even, these are so many that to denote all by distinctive colourings on a map is next to impossible. The Russians are predominant, but in many districts are quite outnumbered by men of other nationalities whom they are now absorbing. This heterogeneity of its subjects is at once the strength and weakness of the State at the present time. For instance, as the Poles in the west and the Mongols in the east have nothing in common as sons of the empire save an admitted allegiance to their Russian conquerors, a coalition of all non-Russians against the State, if successful, would result in an absolute shattering of the empire into many antagonistic fragments. For practical purposes the dissimilarity of races inhabiting the empire may be ignored, and the entity of the State regarded as entirely Russian.

It has been so generally the fashion to ignore the history of Russia prior to the eighteenth century, that comparatively few English people know anything concerning the origin of the Russian Empire. The main facts may be stated briefly, as a knowledge of them will be of use in arriving at a correct estimate of the progress Russia is making to-day.

European Russia is an immense plain, its centre barely four hundred feet above sea-level. Lakes are plentiful, and great rivers with many ramifications flow slowly by tortuous channels towards the south-east, or the north-west. The land is rising slowly: at no very distant geological period it was submerged, and at one time — perhaps that of the Argonauts — there was a natural waterway between the Black Sea and the Baltic, just as now the rivers are connected by different navigable canals.

Europe has been invaded and peopled from the East at various times, and of these immigrants the Slavs for the most part took the direction of the great waterways of Russia; that is, went up the rivers from the south-east to the north-west. In addition to their nomadic habits, internecine warfare and various other causes led to their dispersion, and the successful resistance of earlier comers determined their progress in certain directions. About 400 B.C. the Scythian branch of the Slav race was settled upon the bank of the Don, but was gradually driven north from the shores of the Black Sea by Greek Colonists. These colonies were taken by the Romans, to fall again to the Slavs about 300 A.D., who in turn were thrust aside by Huns, Turks, Goths, Pechenegians, and others. In the fifth century the Slavs were established on the Dnieper at Kief, and on the Ilmen at Novgorod, where they progressed and became civilised; in the seventh century they were also once more on the shores of the Black Sea. The little that is known of them is to the effect that they were idolaters, hospitable, and fond of fermented liquors; they hunted for furs, raised cattle, and farmed bees; lived in communities governed by elected or hereditary elders, and appear to have been an inoffensive people much preyed upon by Asiatics in the south, Vikings in the north, and were unable to agree with each other. In 862, Rurik, a Varœger prince, invaded Russia with his Norsemen,

conquered the Novgorod Republic and established his race as ruler of the Slavs. Some of his followers pushed further south, occupied Kief, and fitted out an expedition against Constantinople. It failed; Rurik's successor annexed Kief, and in time the Norsemen subjugated the Drevlians, Sieverskis, Krivitches, and other Slav tribes, and so became masters of Russia.

It has been contended that the Varœgers were Slavs, or closely akin to them, or were quickly absorbed by them; but to the contrary there is indisputable evidence that the invaders were a distinct race possessing qualities peculiar to the Norsemen, that they introduced the right of primogeniture, imposed laws similar to "Knut's Code," were aggressive, and successful. Usually they married women of their own race, and the direct descendants of Rurik were wedded with members of the reigning houses of France, Hungary, Germany, and England, as well as of Sweden and Norway. The freedom accorded to women and the high position some of them took in the State were quite foreign to Slav customs and as the Scandinavian element died out feminine privileges and influence declined; then the seclusion of women in the Asiatic manner prevailed, and lasted until the days of Peter I.

The descendants of Rurik fought against each other on matters of precedence and succession. The history of Russia during their dominion is a story of internecine strife and disaster, of wars against Poles, Swedes, Lithuanians, Polovtsi, and predatory tribes on the south and east. In 1224 the Russians had to make common cause with their neighbouring enemies to repel an invasion of the Tartars. Notwithstanding this, they were beaten, and Kief fell. Thirteen years later a second invasion subjugated the new capital, Vladimir, and brought eastern and southern Russia under Mongol rule. Lithuanians and Poles pressed upon them

from west and north-west; the Russians could extend only towards the north-east.

In these times and with this environment, Moscow grew to importance. It had been founded by Yuri, a son of that descendant of Rurik who had married Gyda, daughter of Harold II. of England; but its real maker was Ivan I., the Purser (1328–1341), who found the power of money greater than that of the sword, whether in dealing with Tartars, or his own kith. Christianity had been introduced into Kief from Constantinople in 866, and in 988 the Norsemen embraced the faith. The heads of the Church, driven to Vladimir when Kief fell, were enticed to Moscow by Ivan, who by his liberality to the Church, made its priests so much his servants that they not only suffered him to take up arms with the Tartars against his Russian neighbours, but even excommunicated a Christian prince at the behest of the Mongols. It was a new policy of aggrandisement which Ivan and his equally unscrupulous successors pursued, and by it the Muscovite was evolved from the Slav race. "Round Moscow, subject to the Tartar yoke, the people became patient and resigned; born to endure bad fortune they could profit by good. The princes of Moscow gained their ends by intrigue, by corruption, by the purchase of consciences, by servility to the Tartar Khans, by perfidy to their equals, by murder and treachery. Politic and persevering, prudent and pitiless, it is their honour to have created the living germ which became Great Russia."

This policy was successful. Ivan IV., "The Terrible," was able to vanquish the Tartars finally, and to dominate the whole of Russia and extend his sovereignty to Sibir in Asia. In the history of the "Troublous Times," subsequent to his death, there are many happenings analogous to recent events in China. The Church resuscitated national fervour, and in the seventeenth century under its influence the Tsars of Muscovy

attained the zenith of power, extending their dominions so enormously, that Peter I. succeeded to a territory reaching almost from the Baltic to the Pacific, and he enlarged the limits to both seas. These Tsars were the real makers of the Russian nation: under their rule relations with the west became general, and reforms were introduced conformable with the capacity of Russia to absorb what is nearest akin to its own spirit from amongst the more progressive nations of the west. The Church escaped the general Reformation, but had its own revolutionary changes which resulted in the reversion to an earlier and more primitive liturgy, which obtains to the present day; the "orthodox dissenters" being termed, paradoxically, the "Old Believers." Peter the Great had no sympathy with Muscovite ideals, and attempted to graft a coarse imitation of western forms upon a rarer stock. Stagnation and corruption were the result. His "pupils" were not more successful, and even the daring innovations of Catherine the Great failed to imbue Russians with the western spirit. By following the policy of the old Tsars of Muscovy, successive rulers have added territories to the empire, and brought neighbouring peoples under their dominion, but no amount of instruction in western ways has altered appreciably the character of the Russian people. Nor is this surprising. A race which, generation after generation, has been ruled by foreigners and survived; which could submit to Norseman, Mongol, German, and Turk, and be content under all; which is by habit quarrelsome but not warlike by nature; which is unused to liberty and incapable of individual independence, is unable to feel the impulses which have made the nations of western Europe progress.

It may have been that belief in the common origin of man, and therefore the similarity of human nature, led the Russian emperors to think that their people could be changed in char-

acter as in appearance by the importation of western methods. They persisted: the people were passive: the change was not wrought. There is no making a silk purse from a sow's lug. Examples, teachers, ample instruction, were provided, but there was no real education — no real progress.

It was not until the later half of the nineteenth century that the Muscovite spirit reasserted itself successfully. After the so-called liberation of the serfs the Slavophil party of Moscow obtained a hearing and followers. Their cry was "Russia for the Russians!" Their creed, faith in the natural abilities of the Slav peoples. In a few years they triumphed. The foreigners were gradually dismissed from Government posts, none are now directly in the employ of the State, and the reaction went so far as to forbid them to acquire freehold property within the empire. An interest was taken in the Russian language and its literature; once more Russia progressed on the line of Muscovite ideals.

Russia, a giant in strength, has aroused herself from the dull lethargy habit had seemingly almost converted into nature, and is now widely awake.

For some time Russia has been progressing rapidly: even during the last twenty years the difference is so great that in the large towns the material changes wrought seem to have converted a stagnant community into an enterprising, go-ahead race, the like of which Europe has not produced since the dawn of the Italian renaissance. The activity is as great as it was with the English people in the days of Queen Elizabeth, though, perhaps, it is not so much a revival as a starting to life.

The reason for this is not difficult to find: it is the result of the internal policy of the State. In almost every department it is the State which initiates, directs, controls, and represses or suppresses. In one particular it gave its subjects a free hand;

those who believed in Russia's ability to be independent of the foreigner, might aid in developing the natural resources of the country; might introduce new industries which the Government would nurse with protective duties on importations from abroad. The way to acquire wealth was open to all. Or, it may be, that the restrictions placed by the Government upon individual action, first in one sphere, then in another, have of themselves been enough to direct the Russian people towards industrial enterprises. Man must have some vent for superfluous energy, and the Russ, who might have taken to art and succeeded, has relapsed on commerce. No doubt the Englishman gets some reward for his devotion to politics, but when one considers what the energy the average man fritters away on party, local, and Imperial politics would accomplish if directed solely to advancing each individual's business, it is clear that in these days of race and world competition the exercise of the whole of one's political privileges has its disadvantages. The majority of Russians are relieved of all trouble of governing themselves and of attempting to govern other people; their interference in domestic or foreign politics is not desired nor allowed. The citizen who recognises that this is a relief can exercise greater activity in other directions.

Like a sponge, Russia has absorbed; she has not assimilated. Whatever there is of western civilisation in the Russian is an accretion; there is no blend. The Russian is an apt imitator; but he stops there. His acquired knowledge does not enable him to initiate similar work, but he becomes competent very quickly to act exactly as he is taught. By himself lying out on the yard did not our Admiral Crump in one short month make of Russian serfs sailors able to manœuvre a fleet into line against the French? Then, what excellent copies of western originals were made in the days of the great Catherine, when in art, letters, dress, deportment, and all things but

OLD ST. PETERSBURG

MAKING PAVING-BLOCKS IN ST. PETERSBURG'S BUSIEST STREET

essentials, the Russians became for a time quite French! So prone is the Russian to imitate that he is apt to mistake his copy for original work, so much so that one may doubt whether Russia will ever find herself. Of late years she has tried to accumulate material wealth by adopting the methods which have proved successful in the west. She is pleased with the result. In the slang of the day, Russia has arrived.

Poland, more than Russia, has immediately benefited by the recent industrial developments. The cause is sufficiently simple. The Poles possessed greater practical knowledge than the Russians, and have established factories whose products find a market in Russia at remunerative prices. Lodz is both the Oldham and Leeds of Russia; Warsaw is the Birmingham, Sheffield, and more, for it furnishes all the articles de Paris, galanterie ware, and goods "made in Germany" to which we are accustomed in the British market. Poland is making a big bid for the trade of the Far East; already her wares compete with foreign goods in all Russia and Siberia west of Lake Baikal. Poland is the western manufacturing annexe of the great Russian Empire, and as that she will continue to progress. Russian Poland is increasingly prosperous, and Poles in Austria and Germany seem anxious to get under Russian rule. There is considerable immigration which the Russians vainly endeavour to check.

The unpalatable fact to British Free-Traders must be the success that has followed the imposition of protective tariffs in the Russian Empire. It is solely to this provision of a sure market that the industrial successes are due, and to it must be attributed the growth of towns, with large and thriving populations, ever increasing in number and wealth. In short the adoption of the principle has increased the resources of the Russian Empire enormously. By manufacturing at home, even at greater cost than what was paid for articles imported

from abroad, the State is in the position of the man who by doing work himself saves a penny by earning it from the outsider.

Mammon worship is becoming as general in Russia as it is in Britain, but Russia provides no outlet for the accumulated savings of the millionaire manufacturers and traders. The class of the newly enriched is likely to become a trouble if not a danger to the State. In Russia, as in England, and elsewhere, there are men who find needful satisfaction in contemplating their increasing wealth. There are others who regard riches as only a stepping-stone to power. In Russia these men are particularly circumscribed: to them wealth brings nothing but a longing it is unable to satisfy. Means are lacking for utilising the Russian *parvenu*. Society does not want him; he cannot attain political importance; if he has only inherited his wealth, even those who have themselves achieved success despise him. True, he may use his wealth to cover his wife with gems, but that is little satisfaction to a man who cannot by any means obtain for himself the recognition he thinks his riches entitle him to receive. His position is pathetic — and ludicrous. He is as unhappy as his fellows who have great wealth in minerals, or produce, on their estates, but are unable to realise their value.

The effect of successful industrialism is seen to best advantage in the better condition of the towns. All exhibit changes, and all decidedly for the better.

Warsaw has improved beyond all expectation; its main streets are well paved and kept, its new buildings are grandiose when they are not handsome, and altogether the city is ostentatiously prosperous, in no less degree, but in not so offensive a manner as Berlin. Soon Warsaw will be a city well worth a long journey to see. The smaller towns do not all share the capital's good fortune, but some, as

Lodz, have simply stepped from the rank of villages to cities in two decades.

St. Petersburg has also benefited.

There is at present keen rivalry for commercial supremacy between the capital and Moscow, and into this struggle the citizens of the older capital are throwing themselves with boldness and zest. Possibly there is not actually greater freedom in Moscow than in St. Petersburg, but it appears that Moscow is making the faster progress. If it has no special privileges, perhaps the mass of traditions act as an incentive to effort. The Empress Anne termed Moscow her haughty little republic; the knowledge of their greater antiquity must produce some sense of independence. Moscow not only founded St. Petersburg, but would continue if it were swept away; Moscow stopped the Tartar, and drove out the Poles; Moscow conquered the north, and colonised the east — with such achievements to its credit it would be surprising indeed if the Muscovite did not consider himself superior to the provincial. Apart from all this, Moscow is so advantageously situated that as a distributing centre it must lead, and therefore its development as a manufacturing town is inevitable.

The Moscow of the literary traveller, the Moscow of which all have heard, was a superb village built in a great hurry less than a hundred years ago. The larger part of that Moscow has already disappeared. The remainder is going as fast as a London slum before a newly elected County Council. Wooden Moscow was picturesque and gay, but it was inconvenient, unsanitary, and fire insurance societies objected to it. Wooden Moscow will never reappear; instead there is a town with immense buildings of white stucco and terra-cotta; a town of surface railways and electric trams; of paved streets burrowed by water and gas companies; of large shops, magnificent arcades, and all that goes to make a modern town fit for the

habitation of the man of business. Those who would see anything of the Moscow they have pictured to themselves must hurry; soon all that will be left of it may be stated in two words — Kremlin, churches. The "bazaar" of Moscow is a thing of the past; instead of the dark, crumbling, foul, old Gostinnoi Dvor, there is a marvellous block of arcades with tiers of overhead galleries — a block containing over one thousand shops and offices, all spick and span as the latest erection in Berlin. Gone, too, is the cloth fair under the wall of the Kitai Gorod; gone the Sunday morning market by the Sukharev Bashnia, gone the scrambling isvoshchiks and the clamouring vendors of second-hand clothing. The Moscow of to-day is lit by electricity, and is eminently progressive and respectable. A bird's-eye view from the summit of Ivan Veliki is still a scene to enchant the eye, but eastward and southward the view is obscured by the dark smoke belched out by many factory stacks. Wood fuel is no longer the rule; the blue sky is clouded by the black smoke from ligneous coal, or screened by the sepia vapour from part-consumed crude petroleum.

As Moscow, so the other towns in the south and east. Kief thinks Moscow slow, Odessa believes Kief is far from being up-to-date. All are modifying their towns in accordance with the views of fitness held in the west. St. Petersburg and the German towns in the Baltic provinces are altering too, but, as they were of brick and stone, bigger buildings of the same material do not bring about so great a change.

The changes indicate unmistakably that Russia is not conventionally eastern or conservative in things material. The people are not content to dream and let the world pass by. They are active, they are strenuous. Russians are making money, spending money, adding to their resources, developing their country as their means permit. What is more they are evolving a people. Measured by the standards of the west,

Russia is making rapid progress. The Russians know this. They believe that their country is another America, and that by adopting certain methods from the west their country will grow in importance as rapidly as the United States has done. How far they are justified in their belief time will show. At present we can observe only the working of methods and policies borrowed from the west by the people who are not Americans, and who possess few, if any, of the characteristic qualities of the American people.

CHAPTER II

YOUNG RUSSIA

LESS than three generations ago Russia was quite mediæval, and much that is opposed to progress lingers in the Russia of to-day.

There is an idea prevalent that Russia is a new country, and that the Slavs are a young people. It matters not how the idea arose. It is erroneous; although generally assumed to be true on the strength of newspaper assertion. The journalist is modern. To him a Russia anterior to Peter the Great is as unthinkable as an antediluvian Atlantis. His Russia came to life some time after the Crimean War; the present Tsar has evolved it, consequently it must be new, and something like America, only younger. The journalist takes the Slav at his own valuation, and the Slav likes to believe that he is young, that his race and country are beginning a career.

The geological age of Russia is of no practical importance, a few æons, more or less, in the age of a country are of little consequence to us living now. The Slavs are as old as, if not older than, the people inhabiting the west of Europe. They followed the others west instead of leading them, that is the difference. What is mistaken for youth, and bursting forth into life, is merely an old man's awakening to activity. Russia, with its serfs, feudal usages, closed communications, and despotic system of government, was being left behind in the race for world supremacy. Now it has entered into competition with other Powers to secure material wealth, which we of the twentieth century regard as the equivalent of civilisation.

Russia may be likened to an old man because although willing, or forced by circumstances, to adopt modern methods, others are not relinquished. To keep up in the race the old man is ready to mount the bicycle, but he will still carry his walking-stick and wear a gabardine; in a foot race he will keep on his jack-boots, and cannot understand that a young man will and must run free.

In Russia, as elsewhere, it is customary to blame the Government, just as the Government officials in turn attribute failure to the people. Foreign critics attach great importance to the form of government, and possibly, without understanding exactly how Russia is governed. It is known that the Tsar is an absolute monarch; it is also pretty generally known that Russia has many very democratic institutions, amongst them the village communes, which are supposed to be practically socialistic. Actually the Government centres in the Tsar, whose power, theoretically, is unlimited. There ranks next, a Council of State, founded by Alexander I., composed of some members of the Imperial family, certain Ministers, and the highest dignitaries of the Court. There is a Committee of ten Ministers and certain Grand Dukes, which constitutes the actual advisory Privy Council of the Emperor in all matters of administration which are beyond the competence of the head of a department. Next in rank is the Senate, founded by Peter I., and though once entrusted with the direction of State Policy, its functions at the present time are restricted to the promulgation of new laws, the enforcement of the legal Code, confirmation of titles of nobility, the delimitation of boundaries and ownership of real estate. It consists of eight divisions, directed by chiefs of departments, and acts as a Court of Appeal for political offences, Civil suits, and Criminal law. Quite apart is the Holy Synod, for the direction of Church affairs.

For Administrative purposes the empire is divided into provinces, and each placed under the rule of a Governor-General, and subdivided to different officials and again subdivided until the unit, whether of the village commune or urban district, is reached, of which last the *starost* or elder, is the individual made responsible for the maintenance of order in his village. In the thirty-six regular provincial governments of European Russia the administration devolves upon the *zemstvo*, a council representing: — the nobility; the rest of the enfranchised inhabitants except the peasants; peasant delegates elected by district assemblies, who must be approved by the Governor. These Councils have been instituted to give the people some limited participation in the administration of such special concerns as affect their district particularly, as drainage, sanitation, and education.

The law of Russia is the Imperial Will; this is made known by ukases or proclamations, which subsequently are embodied in the codified law. Actually a ministerial decree, order in council, or ruling of the head of a department, is accepted as law by the officials to whom such are addressed.

The will of the Tsar is paramount, at least theoretically, for wherever there is administration by Council the Crown is represented. For instance, at the Holy Synod the Emperor is represented by a layman, the procurator, who decides what topics shall be discussed, and without his approval first obtained no decree of the Synod is valid. So, at the meetings of Urban and District Councils, the local governor is represented, and has the right to veto any decision at which the Council may arrive, and to annul all decrees that are irregular, or treat of matters other than those properly relegated to the Council. Each official, chinovnik, is responsible to his superior officers, they in turn to superiors, until the head of the department is reached, who is responsible to the Tsar. The officials are

bound by the laws, by regulations and by instructions from their superiors, and they rule the country. The tendency is to increase their power, and to reduce that of the composite Councils; the activity of Town Councils is circumscribed, and since 1889 the autocracy of the communal village administration has been considerably modified by the appointment of more resident district magistrates.

It is by these means that the State governs. The army, the *ultima ratio regum*, can at need enforce the rule of the Crown, and many civil servants direct and control the progress of the Tsar's subjects. The State has also to initiate. Its policy is modern enough in some particulars; it knows the value of protecting home industries, and how to engage successfully in a tariff war.

It also leans towards Socialism, by directly interfering with industries, wages, and carrying on manufacturing and other monopolies. It may be, of course, that the Russian Minister of Finance is unwilling that any taxable commodity should fail in yielding revenue. Ivan the Terrible would not allow the Moscow merchants to trade without his direct permission, and after that was given they must wait until he and his chancellors had bought and sold in every market. The Russian State to-day is almost as jealous. It may be that it is merely disarming Socialism by adopting as much of its principle as it can absorb with profit to itself.

There are State railways and communications; there are the State forests and domains, State mines, fisheries, and farms, State industries — railway, shipping, prison, and other; and latest, the spirit monopoly, worked solely by the State, and this first year returning a profit of 106 per cent. on the capital employed.

Exploitation by private firms is regulated by requiring the employment of State officials. For instance, in a mine there

must be an engineer qualified by Government degree, wearing a uniform, but salaried by the owner. If explosives are used, another expert must be engaged in addition. An inspector, assistant inspector, superintendent of police, policemen, doctor, nurses, hospital and other attendants according to the magnitude of the undertaking, must be engaged by the owner, though all are Government employés. Strangest of all, the private firms may have to provide the salary, or part of the salary, of the local justice. In some instances the salaries are paid to the State, and the official is salaried by the State according to rank and seniority.

This principle extends very far; the ordinary urban householders must engage policemen who, for breaches of by-laws, are summoned and fined without reference to the householder, whose servants they are. In fact, Russia seems to be worked entirely by people who wear the Government uniform. All these officials, from the humble dvornik to the head engineer, have a Government qualification, but often little practical experience of the work required of them. That experience they obtain at the cost of their employers. Foreign firms in business in Russia take these men just as whaling captains will take a certificated mate because the Board of Trade regulations require them to do so, and in addition have their own picked men to do the actual, practical work. The number of "qualified" men is increasing, and the sphere of their activity widening.

Every trader must take out a licence, every one he employs must be licensed; to take out a wrong licence is to risk a heavy fine. All the limits of sublimed socialism are evident, and the division of labour carried to ridiculous extremes. A licensed clerk may not receive money, even though it be but a few copeeks to put right one of his own errors of figuring, for the man who is licensed for one thing may not attempt another.

In the higher stages, if a corporation has the right to mine gold at a certain place, and also discovers copper, it may not mine the copper — so nothing is said of the find, and good ore goes on to the heap of tailings. That is the economical exploitation of the natural resources of the country under State direction.

The village commune which existed in different forms from time immemorial has inclined the Russian peasant towards socialism. An individual, instead of trying to achieve something for himself, forms an artel, or association. The artel determines the charges to be made, or wages to be accepted, and receives the money, which the members share. Hotel waiters pool their tips, labourers the prices paid for different jobs, messengers the allowed tax. In streets, offices, warehouses, shops, factories, railway stations, and the State Customs the artelshchik is found. The one advantage is that his artel guarantees not his competence but his honesty, in so far as it makes good all losses occasioned by his fraud or negligence.

The individual has few opportunities for distinguishing himself outside the Government service. In the service there is sometimes incompetency, sometimes dishonesty, and always intrigue. The servant who is discovered in any irregularity is either transferred to a distant post, or resigns the service. If he has been popular with his subordinates, and has been sufficiently industrious to learn how departments are managed, he commences in some business on his own account and succeeds. Other people benefit, and the Government is in some measure compensated for its loss of a good servant, or the depredations of a bad one.

These things are all evidence of age, not of youth. The young community fits itself with a Government suited to its needs, and the system of government becomes more intricate as the community grows, and society becomes more complex.

The autocrat acting through subordinates and directing every action, is the outcome of a system as old as the Chinese civilisation, and is essentially eastern rather than western and modern.

In Russia it is not easy to determine what exactly may be done with impunity. In some respects life there is like that in the old German town where it is well to note the hour before one sneezes, since whoever indulges at certain times is mulcted in a fine of one thaler. The Muscovite mujik, who dared to wipe his nose on a handkerchief which bore the Tsar's portrait, found himself in a sea of troubles. Ample latitude is allowed in the way of personal abuse, but one may not call another a fool — there is a Scriptural injunction against that, and it is consequently a legal offence, too. A "vint" player called his partner a fool for needlessly trumping their trick. The offended man brought his accuser before the court. The culprit pleaded provocation and, knowing that the judge would be a passionate follower of the national game, explained the matter in detail. The judge became interested; got excited as the particulars of the play were given. "I took the trick with my queen, and instead of throwing away, my partner played the king!" shouted the abuser. "The fool!" said the judge, "Ah-hem—next case."

There are miscarriages of justice in every country. Russia is no exception to the rule, but in some instances the methods of officialdom are peculiar to the country and race. Here is an illustrative instance:

> "Marfa Ivanovna was a hand in a tobacco factory where Ivan Petrovich is foreman; Ivan seduces Marfa; deserts her; subsequently in a low beer-shop the two meet, the woman upbraids the man; he, enraged, pushes her away; a knife is in his hand, with it she is wounded; two days afterwards she dies; Ivan is arrested and sent to trial. All

THE MOSCOW OMNIBUS

PEOPLE'S MARKET, ST. PETERSBURG

this is commonplace; there is nothing that makes Russia indispensable to the story. But note the sequel. Some officials, anxious for a case against the keeper of the beer-shop, deemed this the opportunity to make one. Matters were so represented to the frequenters of the house who were present, that they admitted a scuffle then took place; by leading questions Ivan was caused to indicate that there was a general fight, in the course of which the woman was hurt. Result: Ivan is set at liberty, and the keeper of the beer-shop is fined 500 hundred roubles for having permitted a disturbance on his premises."

Any ordinary person who endeavours to thwart the holders of office is quickly worsted; by experience the general public has learned that it is best not to meddle with the methods of officialdom. Hence the apathy to the common welfare, and the triumph of the corrupt official. Late one night three well-to-do Moscow citizens were walking along the Sretenka when they saw one of their townsmen in a state of helpless intoxication being shamefully ill-treated and despoiled of his garments by a dvornik — a creature of the police. Finding remonstrance of no avail, they sought the aid of a gorodvoi, a policeman of higher grade, and wished the offending dvornik taken into custody. This the policeman refused to do unless they would accompany him to the chastok and lay their plaint personally before the chief there. To this they consented. They had to remain in the police-station all night, and quite late the next day their evidence was taken and they were permitted to go to their homes. Some days later they were summoned to attend at the chastok, and kept waiting long in the ante-room. When the chief saw them he said they appeared to be the aggressors. Did they not believe it? He would call the accused's witnesses who had already recognised

them in the ante-room. One after another a number of strangers to them testified to a quite different story. Were they convinced now? Not in the least; but they expressed their satisfaction, were quite grateful that they were allowed to go free and that the case could be dropped without a "scandalous exposure" of themselves!

If one of the public does get a temporary advantage over an official, it is generally obtained unconsciously. An erstwhile chief of police in a great town, hearing that at a certain tavern the keeper was in the habit of taking even the clothes of his customers in pawn, determined himself to investigate this alleged breach of the law. He disguised himself with wig, beard, and paint, and in peasant's garb went to the tavern. Soon, pretending to have drunk away all his money, he offered his sheepskin coat as security in exchange for vodka. The attendant referred to the proprietor, who came, gleefully rubbing his hands, for he had already recognised his customer. "Not needful, I assure Your Excellency! Come when you like, and drink just what you like; I will trust you," he said in all good faith, for it did not seem to him at all improbable that an official, a noble by birth and of exalted station, should resort to a low tavern to indulge in a sly drinking bout.

Toleration of other persons' belief is characteristic of the present age in Western Europe, but the orthodox Church in Russia does not countenance lenity in dealing with heretics. Only last autumn there were riots at Pavlovka because of the persecution of the heterodox by the Church. A strong expression of opinion was also evoked by the utterances of a Mr. Stakhovich at a Congress of the Home Missions held at Orel. Mr. Stakhovich was the official representative of the Government for the Nobility, and the subject before the Congress was the method of fighting dissent in the Province of Orel.

Mr. Stakhovich had the temerity to move that the Congress

should petition for the abolition of the punishment attached to "offences and crimes" against religion.

Among other things he related an incident in the district of Trubchevsk, in the government of Orel, where, with the knowledge and approval of the priest and the local authorities, persons suspected of being Stundists were imprisoned in the church. A table covered with a clean cloth was then brought in, and on it was placed an ikon of the Virgin Mary. The prisoners were led separately to the table and ordered to kiss the picture. If they refused they were thrashed. Those whose faith was weak at once returned to orthodoxy; but there were others whose thrashing had to be repeated four times. This, it was stated, happened some eighteen years ago.

Characteristic of the feelings and manner of thought of the priests is the answer which Mr. Stakhovich received from one to whom he said, "You stated there were formerly forty Stundist families in this district, and that now there are only four. What has become of the others?" "Oh," was the answer, "they have been deported by the grace of God to Siberia and the Trans-Caspian district."

It is true that toleration was proclaimed in 1883; but exception was made in the law for certain sects whose tenets are dangerous to life, or treasonable to the State. These are classed as "especially obnoxious" sects, and, by Russian legislative procedure, the number of sects which can be brought under this heading is liable to be added to at any time by "Ministerial Circulars." These are secret documents sent to governing officials, and practically instruct them how to interpret the law. So secret are these "Circulars," that it is not infrequent for them to be sent round, by a trusted official hand, for the recipients merely to read (and sign their names as having read), no single copy being allowed to remain in the hands of any one outside the Ministerial Chancelerie at St. Petersburg.

In this way innocent-looking laws are used as terrible engines of persecution, while all the time the Russian official, and the Russian Press, for the benefit of Western Europe, cry aloud in tones of outraged innocence that such and such things are not, and cannot be, for the law of the land is so and so, and whoever says what is contrary to it is a traducer and unworthy of belief.

A jocular tongue is likely to get its owner into trouble. Before dawn one summer's day a too zealous nun, begging on behalf of St. Nicholas, aroused from his slumbers a drowsy shop-keeper who resented this interference with his rest. "Away little mother, away!" he called back. "At this unearthly hour your good saint sleepeth." The sister was hurt by this levity; considering it an aspersion upon the character of the saint who is renowned for his watchfulness, she reported the words. The man was brought before the authorities and sentenced to a term of detention in the chastok and a Church penance.

The penance is a living institution, not only as a religious discipline, but the fitting accompaniment to a legal punishment for certain offences. It is said that once a British subject, who had committed some trifling misdemeanour, was ordered a penance and sent to the nearest Anglican church. What happened there need not be stated here lest High and Low Church partisans dispute as to its legality. Let it suffice that all parties were satisfied.

The Russian Church is very forgiving, quite Catholic, and absolutely indiscriminate in rendering aid and service to those of its members who are in need, but it has its dark places and in proportion as its responsibilities become greater and more generally apparent so do its shortcomings increase. A few years ago, a number of Russians duly classed in Passport and Police-book as of the Russian Orthodox Faith, with certificates

proving their regular attendance at the Communion of the Church, were tried and convicted of holding heathen rites in secret, including the offering of a human victim to gods who were older in the land by many centuries than the religion of Christ. The law of Russia, the State, compelled certain religious observances, and these heathens duly obeyed it, but kept up the faith they preferred side by side with their Church attendance.

Paganism is not extinct in European Russia, and is not confined to isolated districts in those Eastern Provinces which came under Russian protection subsequent to the Russo-Turkish War.

In many ways the Russian State is generous to the poor and afflicted. According to the sterner code of the west the Russian is too philanthropic, giving relief so often and so variously as to encourage indigence. Free hospitals, schools, playgrounds, orphanages, libraries, almshouses, and the like are found all over Russia and Siberia. The wealthy are too generous. On a public holiday the people get not only parks thrown open, but are entertained with an outdoor theatre, acrobatic performances, fireworks, free swings and rides, and there is music everywhere. There are associations for almost every good work, including a society for encouraging athletic games. Children are prayed, and almost paid, to play football and tennis in summer; not a village but has its swings and giant's strides; and, out in Siberia, toboggan slides, spring-boards, seesaws, and walking-poles are also general, and may be used by all, free. If the young Russian does not grow healthy, vigorous, and strong, it is not from lack of opportunity to exercise himself, but because habit is too strong with his parents.

It is said Russian children cannot play. Some are not allowed to do so; but all can, and most do, play as heartily

as do English or any other children. The first check is when the child goes to school and commences too early to wear a uniform and feel its responsibilities. Once in the uniform the Russian is in it for ever. The university garb succeeds that of the school, and the graduate must continue wearing a decoration or docket until he goes to his last sleep, and in his still, closed hand is placed "the passport to St. Nicholas," which the Orthodox have buried with them.

It is to the youth of Russia that one looks for indications of any change. The university students everywhere are assumed to be rather ahead than abreast of the tendencies of the day, and the Russian student is no exception to the rule. The life is probably unique, for there is no common association of students at all. The universities are merely an aggregation of class-rooms and lecture-halls. The students taking a course live in the town with their parents or relatives and are coached at home. Those who must live in lodgings take apartments in a furnished hotel, or board in a private family. No hotel or house may become a centre for students; nor may any restaurant, tavern, or *café* cater for them specially. If the university students should resort there that place is at once closed. The student may know, at least by sight, those who take the same course and attend the same lectures as himself, but he cannot make acquaintances easily, and there is no possibility of a class becoming so closely knit by common ties as to act like a living organism. Every class-room has its inspector. If the students between lectures talk with each other, or, meeting in the corridors or entrance by chance, stop to converse, the inspector at once interferes and separates them. Life at the universities is unutterably dull. All wear uniforms, all are shunned as students. The latest scheme is to build hostels, ostensibly that there may be some such common life and unison as exists at other universities, but the students believe that the hostels will

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strike at such few liberties as remain to them. The students who do not board with their parents or responsible relations will be housed in these hostels, where inspectors will have them completely at their mercy and prevent association, and not allow them a moment unwatched and untended.

The general attitude of the university student is one of antagonism to the Government. He hates the army as being the apotheosis of brute force; army officers have equal contempt for the students. Sent into the army as a disciplinary measure, the recalcitrant student is committed to the greatest misery; he is also just where he is not wanted, and where most harmful. The soldiers understand him if the officers do not. It is with them that he has to associate, and he can influence them. The danger was perceived and the remedy at once applied. The university students are recruited from all classes. A certain amount of learning frees one from military service, and it is military service the Russian peasant is most anxious to avoid. The peasant student, when he gets back to his own village, makes the army less popular there. The petty trader and the well-to-do peasant have equal contempt for the army; the petty officers get less as wages than they themselves can make easily. They measure his fitness by the money he receives, think him a fool to work for so little, and do not hesitate to express their opinion. Every year the army becomes more unpopular with the masses.

It is to a Government position of some kind that the educated Russian turns, and with the conditions that obtain the Government does secure the best talent the country produces, for only a few and not the majority attempt to make their own way in the world — which is not the same as making one's way to eminence in the Services.

The Russian university students, who are not trying for situations under the Government or taking the medical degree,

direct their attention to science, and particularly to the applied sciences, with a view to engaging in some industrial pursuit. Perhaps through commerce will come as great, or greater, freedom, in other matters affecting the public welfare. It seems at last to be recognised by the State that if commerce is to succeed it must not be fettered with illimitable restrictions. When free commerce and industry shall have begotten a knowledge of the obligations liberty confers, it is only reasonable to suppose that there will be general relaxation of State control.

CHAPTER III

THE NEW AMERICA

THE Russia of to-day is often termed the "New America." The Russians themselves so regard it; but when one wishes to find exact points of resemblance, one is told that the portion of the Russian Empire which is most like the United States is the industrial and agricultural region in the south-east of European Russia. Travellers say that this country is much the same as the "Middle states"; but, for the Russians there the "New America" is the distant lands towards sunrise; in central Siberia it is said to be beyond Baikal, and those there say that the "New America" is Manchuria.

Russia is presumed to rival America in extent, natural wealth, and, recently, in productiveness. In the south-east there is grown better wheat than that of Dobrudscha, a wheat that equals, if it does not surpass, the best of the Red River country. The wheat belt is an immense tract, but it can be extended almost indefinitely, and it is said the land to be brought under cultivation south-east of Samara is even better than any yet sown.

It is on the "black soil," and much of the black soil country remains to be opened up by railways and pioneer settlers. The thickness varies from two inches to more than six feet, and where it is thickest it is not likely ever to become exhausted, provided that it is farmed in a sensible manner. Up to the present the land has been cultivated in primitive fashion; the

rotation of crops is not attempted, manures and top dressings are unused, the remedy practised is to allow the land to lie fallow. In the production of wheat and other cereals Russia may yet rival America.

The next natural product of importance is timber; of this there is in Russia and Siberia an apparently inexhaustible supply. It is not so large as American timber; much of it is at present inaccessible, and the science of forestry is neither understood nor valued. Much of the forest is birch, and birch-wood makes the best paper-pulp. This is an industry which is in its infancy; it must grow; and there is more than one fortune in it for the right people.

It is in the petroleum industry that Russia most closely rivals the United States of America. In 1890 the Baku oil field produced over a thousand million imperial gallons of crude petroleum, some 15 per cent. less than the American output. In 1899 the produce from Baku had increased to 2197 million gallons, or some 15 per cent. more than that of America in the same year.

Some twenty thousand hands are employed in the Baku oil district, but of these fewer than five thousand are directly engaged in getting oil, refining it, and treating the bye-products. Less than half this number is Russian; Persians, Tartars, and Armenians form the bulk. The unskilled labourer receives from thirty to fifty shillings a month as wages; fifty shillings is the average pay of stokers, oilers, still-men, and receivers; mechanics get from four to six pounds a month, and engineers from five to eight. The chief engineers, chemists, and managers are foreigners receiving high salaries.

The Baku field is not very extensive, and at the present rate of production must within a few years be exhausted. There are now some 160 firms engaged in the industry, of whom only thirty-three commenced operations before 1890,

whilst upwards of sixty have been established since 1898. Large profits have been made; the Mirzosff Company has paid a dividend of 50 per cent., the Caspian Company 43 per cent., the Baku Company 38 per cent., and the Schibaieff, 28 per cent.

The price paid to the Government for leases of State oil-land has averaged recently 0.22 of a penny per imperial gallon raised, though as much as 0.52 has been paid, and 0.68 was once offered. The average productiveness of the wells is diminishing each year, and the average depth increasing; there are fewer fountains; at higher levels than 1120 feet no fountains have been struck, and only one at a greater depth than 1680 feet.

Prospecting on land at any considerable distance from the known field has been unsuccessful, and borings to the depth of 2000 feet have proved barren. Indications of the existence of naphtha deposits have been found in other parts of Russia and Siberia, but so far nothing nearly so rich as the Baku field has been struck. The limits of this area are now practically known, and the firms most largely interested, by the construction of reservoirs and refineries, are able to meet the competition of smaller proprietors and lessees, or to take the whole of their crude product, and so control the supply, just as through their agencies and local stores they are able to command the Russian home markets.

It is pretty generally known that the Standard Oil Trust of America has tried repeatedly to acquire an interest in the Russian oil fields; it is not so generally known that at the present time a combination is in existence for securing a monopoly by purchasing claims and properties, by acquiring a controlling interest in others, and starving out recalcitrant owners. The work is being done very unostentatiously through a London Bank, a corporation which Mr. Rockefeller could

buy up or control — though there is no reason to suppose that he has any such intention. Nor is it likely that the trust is being formed with the connivance of the Russian Government, for its policy is opposed to the creation of private monopolies.

Some years ago, when the output was much less than at present and the method of storage and distribution primitive, a Jew firm interested in the industry attempted to make a corner in oil. Barrels and tank waggons afforded the only means of conveying the oil to Batum, the port of shipment, and this firm gradually got the whole of the available rolling stock of the railway loaded with its oil, and then, instead of taking delivery, elected to pay demurrage on the waggons, as entitled to do by the regulations. There was a shortage in the market; prices rose; other companies were unable to get their oil taken from Baku. The railway authorities telegraphed to St. Petersburg for instructions, and obtained an immediate answer to the effect that if the consignees did not take delivery within twenty-four hours the tanks were to be emptied on to the line and returned to Baku, and so the Jew corner in petroleum was broken, and it is probable that any subsequent attempt to raise prices artificially will call for similar interference on the part of the State.

The Government recognises that cheap fuel is of vital importance to the manufacturing industries, and of recent years — since 1888 particularly, by the Forest Preservation Law — has restricted even the Russian freeholder from destroying "protective" woods which serve against the encroachment of rivers, dry tracts, &c., and in some other instances require him to have Government permission to fell timber.

Russia produces about twelve million tons of coal a year, and the railways alone consume some three and a half million tons of mineral fuel and ten and a half million cubic yards of wood.

The production of pig-iron amounts to two and three quarter million tons and could be largely increased but for the restrictions placed upon the consumption of wood fuel in connection with the "possession" iron works leased from the Crown. These last are mostly in the celebrated Ural district, and a commission of experts appointed by the Minister of Finance to investigate the causes of the slow development of the iron industry in that region, reported in 1899, attributing the stagnation to absence of healthy competition, the imposition of troublesome restrictions, adherence to routine, and antiquated methods of transport.

In short, the proprietors and lessees of mines do not want new-comers in the industry, and the Government would not lease forest land for fuel to any possible rivals of the existing lessees and miners, even though its forests are rotting where they stand! Then there are vexatious restrictions due to the land not having been yet allotted since the emancipation of the serfs in 1861, so that the semi-feudal tenure is still in force. Not knowing how the land will be divided, and what portions will fall to their share, landowners do not care to improve and exploit lands which may be taken from them. Some of the land is leased from Bashkir tribes, who reserve the right of fishing in the lakes, with the right of way thereto, and this leads to quarrels and regular pitched battles not conducive to the development of industry.

The committee stated that the ore to be worked amounted to some two thousand four hundred million tons, and that the "Magnitnaia Gora," not yet explored, is the largest mass of magnetite ever seen, and must amount to several million tons. There is no scarcity of ore in the Urals, but the output depends upon the fuel available, and the report states that the forty million acres of forest allotted to the Ural industry allow of over four million tons of pig iron being produced annually for many years to come. The actual output is less than three

quarters of a million tons, out of a total for the Russian Empire of two and three quarter millions.

The great coal and iron field is in the south, the Donetz region, where 1,332,659 tons of pig iron were produced in 1899. This region developed quickly because there were so few restrictions and prohibitions issued by various authorities, and because all, from the Government officials to the peasants, were ready to aid and encourage mining there.

In the metal industry the works of the English New Russia Company are an easy first. The mines are in the Kherson Government, about seventy-five miles from the port of Mariupol, on the Sea of Azov. The works were started so long ago as 1869, by Mr. John Hughes, of Dowlais, and have now grown into a town with a population of over 25,000. It is named Usova, after the founder, and is in every way a model settlement. The company employs some 15,000 hands, and is by far the largest iron producer in Russia, though, in point of capital, it is ninth down the list of iron companies. A year's output comprises 295,055 tons of pig iron, 120,000 tons of steel rails, 20,000 tons of manufactured iron, 150,000 tons of steel, three quarters of a million tons of coal, and ten million bricks, besides lime, flux, manganese, and the like. The company provides a hospital and dispensary, whose maintenance costs nearly £10,000 a year. Schools for 1000 children turn over £15,000 a year, and in addition there are clubs, baths, co-operative supply stores, waterworks, drainage and sanitary works — in short, this English company in Russia is abreast of the best American companies in many things. Year after year it increased its dividend until it reached 20 per cent.; about a decade ago it paid 30 per cent.; in 1894 in addition to a cash dividend of 25 per cent., each share was doubled, and since then dividends of 15 per cent., 20 per cent., and 25 per cent. have been paid. No companies in the same industry have done

A SNAP-SHOT FROM THE TRAIN WHEN PASSING THROUGH THE "NEW AMERICA"

better, but in Russia several have done exceedingly well, compared with similar undertakings in other countries.

Mr. John Hughes was formerly a contractor to the British Government and a man of untiring energy and indomitable pluck. His business characteristics, as well as Russian methods, are shown in the following anecdote which I heard from his own lips. When the Trans-Caspian railway was being built he made a great quantity of rails, knowing that sooner or later they would be needed. One day an official of the War Department arrived at Usova and ultimately left an order for some millions of poods of rails to be delivered within a fortnight. At once rails were loaded up into trucks and the traffic manager of the line communicated with as to the conveyance of the material to the port. He raised the usual objections. The notice was too short.

"It was but yesterday you were asking me for traffic," said Mr. Hughes.

"But then, when the train gets to Mariupol, there will be no labourers to unload it."

"I am sending my own men to do that."

"Ah — then there will be no ship at the port to take delivery."

"Yes there will, for I have wired to Constantinople chartering some English ships; they are on the way, and must not be kept waiting for cargo by you."

"Any way — I cannot take the rails."

"Any way, you won't, you mean. I am going to get them there all the same. At three o'clock this afternoon the first train will be at the siding ready for you to take on."

"I shall have no locomotive free."

"I have two — either of them can take the train on, and *will* if you have nothing to do it with."

"The line will be blocked," persisted the superintendent.

"But my engines are larger and stronger than anything you have; my train of rails will be heavier than anything you can oppose to it, and if one of your trains is in the way, mine will go straight on and push it back to Mariupol — and if necessary, on into the sea. It will be there at three o'clock. Be ready for it."

At three o'clock it was there — and it went on.

The textile industries are firmly established in Russia, Lodz in Poland has probably benefited more than any one town, but St. Petersburg, Moscow, and the old towns of Muscovy, such as Vladimir, Kolomna, Kostroma, and Uglich, have shared in the profitable and thriving trade. Lodz at the end of the eighteenth century was but a village with less than two hundred inhabitants; in 1840 it had 20,000, in 1860, 60,000, and at the present time has some 315,000, one firm alone employing over 7000 hands in cotton spinning, and paying dividends of about 10 per cent. on a capital of a million sterling. These are moderate profits in comparison with some declared. For instance, in 1899 the shareholders in the Sobinsky Mill at Vladimir, with a capital of £160,000, divided some £350,000 accrued profits, equal to a dividend of 200 per cent., of which nearly one half had been made in the current year. Dividends between 15 and 50 per cent. have not been uncommon. Probably the best instance of the way capital benefits by the Russian method of protection, is afforded by a cosmopolitan company having mills in England and Russia, practically under the same direction and control. The Lancashire mill had difficulty in paying 4 per cent., and never exceeded five, for a term during which the Russian mills made never less than 50 per cent. and often much more.

The wages paid are very low. In a large mill in central Russia the best-paid forewoman received only thirty-six copeeks for a day of 11½ hours, earning therefore about 4*s.* 6*d.* a week. The mill hands received less than 9*d.* a day.

The industries next in importance from the point of view of progress are animal products, food stuffs, glass, porcelain and pottery, chemicals and paper. In all these large profits have been made. In most there is constant expansion of business; and, primarily to serve these staple industries, there has been a corresponding increase of minor, collateral, manufacturing trades. Small traders, manufacturers, and adventurers in tentative fashion are not encouraged; the larger and bolder the undertaking the greater its chances of success in the "New America." Not all succeed. In every class there are failures, but in considering the possibilities of a country these may be ignored. It is sufficient to know that, with average fortune and good management, large profits are obtainable.

In its eagerness to trade with Great Britain, Russia places particular stress upon its production of cereals and food stuffs, and attention is called to its immense reserves of raw material.

The exports of vegetable products, and even of mineral products, do not make an America. Given abundant natural resources and the means to exploit them, then industries will result, and it is industrial America that Russia attempts to rival.

It expects to attain the end by adopting the same method of rigid Protection. The development of Russian industries is considered to be satisfactory. Guaranteed a market, they have grown under the influence of Protection, some increasing five, some four, and some three-fold, in a decade. The majority have just about doubled the turnover in the same term. The aggregate growth during the quinquennial period of 1892–1897 was four times more rapid than the preceding five years, which itself was six times more rapid than the increase during the preceding ten years. In the words of the Minister of Finance, "the progress in our manufacturing industries proves clearly that the policy of protection has given excellent results." In

fact, the development of industries has been so rapid that the production of raw material, coal and iron, has been unequal to the demand, and has to be met by imports from foreign countries, although immense stores of both lie unworked at home.

One point all who would become interested in Russian enterprises must remember — Russia is a despotic country, and there is a direct, variable tax upon trade and industries. In 1887 this direct impost yielded nearly twenty-nine million roubles; it increased during the next ten years at an average rate of about two million roubles per annum, which may be taken as a fair, reasonable increase considering the growth of the industries. Thus, in 1898, over forty-eight million roubles were derived by direct taxation of the trades and industries of Russia; in 1899 the sum actually received was over sixty-one million roubles, an increase in one year nearly equal to the aggregate increase of the ten previous years, and itself some seven millions in excess of the Budget estimate. In 1900 the direct tax was expected to yield fifty-nine millions, and for 1901 the estimate is 62,701,500 roubles. If, therefore, trade has doubled its turnover during the past decade, the direct impost has likewise doubled in the same term. Again, without warning, an extra import duty of one rouble per pood of 36 lb. was placed upon raw cotton, without drawbacks for existing contracts. Spinners were aghast, but — such is the law of the "New America." It is unlikely that Russia, as represented by the Ministry of Finance, has any wish to cripple, much less kill, the geese which lay golden, taxable eggs. It is within the Minister's discretion to levy such taxes, as, in his opinion, the industries can afford to pay. The heavy increase of 1899, upon a falling demand, has had the effect of crippling certain industries, notably textiles, but the best of these managed to pay dividends, say 6 instead of 10 per cent. which would be considered good in the countries of Western Europe. An average assess-

ment is sure to press hardly upon some industry; thus it is that those manufacturing concerns which survive are those which have been, and are, making the largest profit on a small capital and turnover. To be successful in the "New America" there must be ample margin; it is suicidal to attempt either to cut prices or to meet competition.

The apparent success of industrial Russia, therefore, is wholly dependent upon the market being reserved by artificial means and a monopoly conferred upon home products. Russia has not a surplus of manufactured goods for export, nor with the present taxation could she sell at a profit in a free market, even if the bulk of the produce were sold in the protected market at present high prices. In a word, the competition of Russian manufacturers abroad is not to be feared at present. For one thing, there is ready a protected market in Russia and the East for all that the "New America" is capable of producing. Russia and Siberia are hungering for goods, for machinery of all kinds, and especially for machinery to make machines. The railways require more rolling stock, and development of new territories is hindered because the fiscal policy requires that the things so badly needed must be made within the empire. Russia exports wheat. It would be preferable to export flour, and mills of the latest type are being erected all over the best wheat-producing area; there is, and long will be, room for many more. Reaping machines, harvesters, threshers, and agricultural implements generally are in great demand. As a Chicago drummer in Samara informed me, the country is a "soft snap" for the firms doing business and having stocks there. To him it was a revelation that the users and consumers hunted about for the sellers, instead of waiting for the new goods to be brought to their notice by travelling agents. A firm only recently engaging in business has sold 167 harvesters in Western Siberia in a single season. Should the tariff war

between Russia and the United States continue, British goods ought to take the place of the American-made machines, against which there is now a differentiated tariff. Many other goods also could be supplied, for the "New America" is hungry — very hungry.

It is in the south-east of Russia that improved methods of agriculture are soonest adopted. The peasants of the west and middle districts seem content to go on in the old inefficient way; when by hard drudgery they fail to make a living, they migrate east, and there continue their simple methods until the force of example compels them to change. There is no conservatism in Siberia outside official circles, but in Russia the old methods are clung to with surprising tenacity. There is lack of education, inability to adapt manners and methods to changed circumstances; a supreme belief in, and absolute reliance upon, the central Government for everything.

In the "New America" there is no initiative; all has to be brought in from the outside. Given the idea, shown the way, helped to a fair start, the Russian can go ahead with facility. The teacher is delighted; more apt pupils never were found. All goes well until the machinery wears, or some little thing goes wrong: then things are at a standstill until outside help has been brought in to right them. If the same accident occurs from the same cause a second time, the Russian will be able to right matters; but if it is from a similar cause he is nonplussed. As a parrot speaks by rote without understanding, so the Russian workman does his task mechanically, and without comprehending, or attempting to comprehend, the why and the wherefore of the different parts of the more or less complicated tools he has to tend daily. He can do what he has done before, but in the simplest things he seems unable to trace the cause from the effect, or to remedy a trifling defect in a rough-and-ready but effectual way.

THE SAND-HEAP, AND CHILDREN'S CORNER

AN AGRICULTURAL COLONY

An experienced workman is a treasure, but experienced workmen are scarce, since the hands for the most part merely take to factory work in the intervals of agricultural employment. They are migrants, if not nomads, going in summer to their villages to till the commune's holding, and returning, sometimes, to the mills for the winter. Such changes become so annoying and expensive that factory managers endeavour to employ only regular workers. Of these there are not many, and, though the individual workman may be ready to stay on, he cannot do so if required for military service, if his village commune will not agree to his absence, or if the police decline to renew his passport. In the engagement of hands the Russian employer has to conform to conditions far more onerous than any demanded by a trades union in Great Britain. Hedged round with laws that take away the essence of all free contract, employers and employed are frequently unable to agree on minor points, and are not free to give and take to their mutual advantage. Says the employer, "The State safeguards your interests; I conform to the law; I will do nothing more." Say the workers: "The conditions are too onerous; we cannot alter the law; we can cease to work, and we will."

With the complete code of factory regulations, with the Government inspectors, the resident responsible manager, and the host of officers whose business it is to adjust the relations of workers and masters, such a thing as a strike cannot occur — that is, theoretically it cannot. If it does it is a misdemeanour, and the penalty is fixed by the code. All the same, the workmen scheme. In one mill all went as usual to their places, but refused to do any work. According to code they had not struck, they had not left their work, or broken their agreements, and committed no offence in the eye of the law. It nevertheless required the interference of the police and the propinquity of a body of Cossacks to get

the mill emptied. The hands were all discharged, and a fresh lot engaged. The point of dispute was the old complaint of the hours of labour; the hands thought the regulation eleven and a half hours too much. Some of the employers thought so too, but in the "New America" all must be in accord before any change can be effected.

Physically Russia may resemble America, it may have a similar climate and equal natural advantages, but unless the Russian people possess certain qualities the Americans have, they will not make any "New America" of any part of the empire. The difference is immense. In the United States of America the State is the servant of the public; in Russia every individual is a servant of the State. In America a number of individuals combine for a certain purpose, achieve their purpose, and the State confirms or legalises their action. In Russia it is the State that initiates, the State that achieves, and the State that looks to the public for approbation. It is the State that leads, guides, and pushes the public in the way it intends they should take.

The State is not only the greatest landowner, but is the greatest trader and the greatest railway contractor in the world. It works over 20,000 miles of railway, and besides administering the various manufacturing and other departments incident to governing a modern State, it is more or less directly responsible for every enterprise undertaken within its territories. It regulates the hours of labour, and even adjusts the scale of wages; by altering imposts it affects the prices of commodities and manufactured goods. So far-reaching is the hand of the State that there seems little for the individual to do apart from it; consequently nearly all the best men are in the employ of the State. In one word, the Russian State is a gigantic "trust," endeavouring to regulate its multitudinous businesses in a way that will return the largest profit. How it is grappling with

various social problems, and in what manner its action is affecting the interests of different classes of subjects the student of sociology may know. It is enough that its methods are different from those of the American Republic, and bear no close resemblance to any of the means employed by European States to achieve pre-eminence.

CHAPTER IV

THE FREE PEASANTS AND THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE

THE Russian agriculturist is becoming fairly well known as an immigrant in the far West; he is known in other ways because novelists have idealised him, agitators have made public his wretchedness, and educated Russians have made studies of his personality and his qualities. Popularly he is supposed to represent the typical Russian. The peasants are the people of Russia. Of the peasants the optimistic expect developments which will make Russia even greater than it is, and help the Slav race to success in the world-struggle for supremacy. Even the Church and the Government have respect for the peasant power, and both priests and officials are careful to avoid situations where they would be in a position of antagonism to it.

The emancipation of the serfs was one thing; providing the freed serfs with the wherewithal to live another. The principle followed is that of the Irish Land Acts, the chief differences being, that in Russia, in nearly all cases, the serfs were made a party to the change independently of any expressed desire on their part. The values were determined by special commissions, before which the ex-serfs of private owners rarely appeared, and in the case of the serfs, or peasants, of the State, had no right to do so. In Russia the landlords were paid by interest-bearing Government bonds, and the peasants did not acquire the land.

A CROWD ON THE THEATRE SQUARE, MOSCOW

The peasant remains poor, dull, stupid, uneducated, uninstructed, and ignorant of the power he possesses. He remains the same slave of his surroundings and conditions as in old Muscovy; it is the aspect of others towards him that has changed.

Less than three generations ago the country was quite mediæval in regard to the peasantry, and its authorities then defended slavery, because "the general state of the laws makes it necessary that the peasants should never of their own free will quit their village communes, and for this reason a liberation of the peasants, such as exists in foreign countries, cannot be effected." The general state of the peasant, however, necessitated some action upon the part of the Government, and in the year 1861 serfage was abolished by order of the Tsar. Another form of slavery was established in its place. England paid millions to its colonists to set free their slaves, in fact purchased their freedom. The Russian State merely paid to the landlords a sum equal to the capitalisation of the dues the landlords had extorted, and charged the sum, plus interest, amortisation and cost of collection, to the peasants.

The Russian serf was attached to the land, ostensibly that he might be available to render military service. The Russian peasant who leaves the village commune without permission to-day is arrested, fined, imprisoned, and sent back to his native place. The passport is a survival from slave-holding days.

The Russian serf contended that he could not pay the dues the landlord demanded, because the land occupied did not yield enough. The Russian peasant has to pay increased dues on land impoverished by bad farming, and gets into arrears with his taxes, for he is individually liable for the amount due if his commune is in default.

The State serfs used to pay a poll-tax and dues; the peasants on the Crown lands continued to do so until 1886,

since when they pay a sum equal to both charges, though it is not termed a tax, only a "land redemption payment."

The scheme was arranged between the Government and the landowners; in many cases the peasants themselves were not even consulted; and in some cases the terms were fixed without consideration of the paying capacity of the peasant occupiers, and consequently have had to be altered since.

The last is the most remarkable and important feature of the transfer. Neither the individual peasant nor the commune possesses the land assigned, but only an inheritable usufruct — that is, the common right to cultivate it. Neither peasant nor commune can relinquish this right or dispose of it. They may not sell the land, or forfeit it, or be rid of it in any way. The freed serfs have no option but to complete the scheme of redemption, by paying the annual levies, from which the State derives a yearly income of about 80 million roubles in respect of 337 million acres.

In many cases the position of the peasant is hopeless; he is born to a heritage of debt, and saddled with an incubus from which he can free himself by emigrating, but in no other manner.

No serf without the consent of his landlord could learn any art, handicraft, or trade, or deal in his own corn or other produce of the land and his labour. At present the peasant cannot, without the assent of his commune, work for wages. From the wages of peasants permitted to work in mines, factories, and industrial works, a part may be deducted and paid to the Government on account of their commune's indebtedness under the land redemption scheme.

The maximum deduction which may be made under this head is an amount not exceeding one-third of the total wages, if a single man, and one-fourth if married, or saddled with the support of relatives.

When the peasants have been unable to pay the taxes there

have been remissions, and in 1881 there was a re-arrangement of terms with the former serf-owners, but the fact remains that the peasants are not bettering themselves; the conditions are such as preclude the creation of wealth by the people, and deprive them of hope and legitimate aspirations. In 1902, Mr. Plehve, the new Minister of the Interior, proposes to remit payments in arrear to the extent of 130 million roubles, and to restrict the individual's liability on account of his commune's indebtedness.

The State has attempted to ameliorate the lot of the peasant, apart from the abatement and remission of taxes. For instance, help has been given to enable peasants to migrate from congested districts; village industries have been encouraged and revived; there is a greater freedom in the matter of accepting employment from outside districts.

The village artisans are considered to be more able than those of the towns, and find employment in all the large cities. Field labour is also undertaken, and gangs of peasant women may be seen weeding the market gardens in the neighbourhood of the capitals. Too often labour of this kind is contracted for by a middleman, who advances the railway fares, feeds, and sometimes lodges, his gang of labourers and, of course, pays them a lower wage than he receives for their hire.

The peasant may live in dirt and squalor, at certain seasons he may be in actual want, but ordinarily he cannot be regarded as a pauper, or, in the bare necessaries of life, even poor. Once a labour agitator from the west tried to persuade a factory hand to federate labour as had been achieved in the west, and so obtain higher wages and shorter hours. The Russian thought the shorter hours and better pay excellent; he wished to hear more of the fortunate workers in the west of Europe and asked how much land each worker had. The agitator answered that in England the workers did not possess land.

"Then how does he feed his cows?" asked the Russian. "He has no cows to feed," admitted the agitator. "No cows! Pshaw! You'll be telling me he has no horse next!"

Every peasant in Russia and Siberia has a horse or draught animal of some kind. In the day's paper is a list of the benefactions made by a local philanthropic society, showing the relief granted. Here are two items: "A. M., widow, aged 34; one boy, aged 12; have nothing: given, 10 roubles. E. K., widow, aged 30; one boy, aged 11; do not possess even a horse: given, 40 roubles."

A point is made of the cheapness of labour in Russia. The wages are one-tenth of those current in the United States of America, but it is for labour of low efficiency. The Russian has not the strength to work as a European has to work. He has not the same stimulus, nor does he deserve the same reward. What the Russian possesses in an inordinate degree is the passive quality of endurance. He is big, he is strong, but he resembles the black poplar rather than the oak. He has neither terseness nor vitality. In a little-read novel one of the characters says that "morals are all a matter of diet; if you underfeed you get crime, if you overfeed you beget vice." Physical quality is even more a question of diet, and the Russian peasant is what he is because he does not feed rationally. The staple foods are sour black-bread and salt; sour cabbage soup, milk curds, and salted fish. A moment's consideration of the chemistry of that diet indicates what is wrong with the Russian peasant.

The low efficiency of the labourer makes his work costly, and its cost is increased by the number of non-producing items — officials — with which he must be surrounded when at work. In addition to the civil officials, the clergy, the army and navy have to be supported by peasant labour, directly or indirectly.

A VIEW IN THE URALS

After the lapse of another seven years the land allotted the peasant communes should become theirs, as the land redemption payments ought by that time to have been completed. Doubtless the arrears will necessitate the continuance of the payments for a further term, and even when there is no more payable under this head the State will in all probability impose additional taxes, so there will be no great immediate change in the condition of the peasants at that year of jubilee.

Twenty years is a period too short for any noticeable change in the people themselves, but mention may be made of a few innovations which indicate a possible alteration in popular habits and customs.

In the Russia of to-day the people are awake. The Government departments are not able to cope with the business brought them; they do not work at high pressure. The higher officials know little or nothing of the business the public are anxious to transact, but have no opportunity of getting through.

Congestion pervades all departments, especially those relegated to the transaction of direct business with the public, as the Post Office, Police, and Customs.

The capitals, St. Petersburg and Moscow, have each but one man selling stamps at the chief Post Office; he closes his drawer at two in the day, and is not able to reckon without the assistance of a counting-board! There are a half-dozen or so branch offices, but at these stamps are as scarce as postal orders are at the huckster-postmaster's shop in a Welsh village. At one branch Post Office in Moscow, the letter-box was filled to overflowing — a dozen letters projected from the slit. I took my letters inside, where the clerk in charge declined to accept them. I explained the matter. "Find a letter-box which is not full," said he. "That will be difficult," said I. "Then wait until one is emptied to-morrow," he returned.

The policeman on point duty, to direct and control the traffic, has been introduced from the west. It is often a sinecure post, but the employment of the gorodovoi in this capacity has done much to weaken the barriers that existed between the actual rulers and the governed. On my first visit to Russia it was considered quite improper to be seen asking anything of a policeman, and I was always in hot water with my acquaintance, because I would insist upon asking the whereabouts of a certain house or church from the man most likely to know. The gorodovoi is now a talking finger-post, made use of by all classes. As controller of traffic he is not a conspicuous success, generally a "refuge" in the roadway would do as well, and if in ordering heavy traffic into a side street one ever listens to the remonstrance of the driver, he almost invariably gives way to the superior logic and determination of the ununiformed mujik.

This is merely an indication of the working of the general principle of avoiding disturbances, to which allusion has been made. The mujik is the leader of perhaps a long line of carts, each second vehicle having a driver. The first man persists; if he is unsuccessful the second comes to his support with further argument, then the third, and so others, until the group attains such proportions that the controller of the traffic yields his point rather than provoke what might prove to be a serious disturbance. In Russian towns there is ordinarily little exhibition of physical force by the rulers over the ruled. The police will remove the incapably intoxicated from the public boulevard with as great care and tenderness as the London police reserve for cases of accident.

Throughout Russia the public, that is the civilians, side with their own members in all conflicts with authority, and in a thronged thoroughfare the least disturbance may develop quickly into a riot which will need to be repressed by mounted

gendarmes or the military. The Russian is of a very excitable temperament, and whenever there is a show of feeling, both sides become more in earnest than the circumstances warrant. But for the praiseworthy forbearance of the humble officials entrusted with the maintenance of the peace, conflicts between the police and the public would be much more frequent and still more fiercely contested. If the people are in the mood to resent interference, it is sufficient that they are opposed by some representative of authority for such trouble to ensue as will make both sides regret that a trifling point was contested. In short there appears to be in Russia not an organised, but a natural opposition to the representatives of Government, and the most insignificant and unsuspected occurrence may serve for its manifestation.

There is not the rigid repression that obtained years ago. The voice of the dissident is heard proclaiming loudly, and he is not molested. A street tram is detained an unreasonable time at a passing place. The passengers do not take into consideration that some accident may have prevented the other car from arriving on time at the point. They clamour for the return of their fare, or insist that the car shall proceed on its journey; they stamp, beat on the sheet iron advertisement panels with sticks, and appeal to the police; he, fearing a disturbance near his point, simply orders the driver of the car to proceed, and, from that moment until it arrives at its destination, the passengers do not allow the man to stop anywhere a minute.

A long queue of citizens is waiting on the Palace Quay, St. Petersburg, in turn for the steamers to the islands. An officer of high rank drives up, disregards the waiters, ignores the policemen keeping them in their relative positions and, instead of falling into place at the end of the line, goes on to the boat before all the others — but he is loudly hissed. An officer remonstrates with

the conductor of a street car for lack of courtesy towards one of his passengers; a peasant passenger tells him to mind his own business and to give orders to his soldiers, not to tram conductors, or citizens, who are free men. These are signs of the times; indications of the growing independence of the Russian peasant. At the same time the gulf between ruler and subject has been bridged. On the occasions of the Tsar's official visit to Moscow, at one point there was nothing between his Imperial Majesty and a Moscow crowd but the single rope that marked the route of the procession. Again, when twenty years ago a peasant durst scarcely look at a Royal Palace, and loitering in its vicinity was almost a crime, now artisans and peasants are all freely admitted to view the State apartments. I witnessed, with some amusement, the wanderings of some pilgrims through the Imperial Treasury in Moscow. They were so superstitious that they crossed themselves reverently before a suit of armour on the stairs, yet by all the officials were treated as politely as the best-read student seeking information on a special subject, and in the Royal Palaces saw as much as any other visitor. England is a democratic country, but if a gang of hop-pickers were allowed to view the State apartments in Buckingham Palace, and by influential intercession obtained access, they would scarcely be made so welcome as peasant pilgrims are in Moscow.

A quality the modern Russian lacks is appreciation of the picturesque. I took a Russian to the Sparrow Hills. He had lived all his life in Moscow, but had never been there before. I pointed out the beauties of that magnificent prospect, which even the troubled Napoleon found time to admire. He was not interested in the least. At last he caught sight of a red-brick chimney-stack, which seemed familiar. A feverish glance through the glass confirmed him. "It is our factory, see, see!" he called in quite childish glee. He was quite happy

then; and through the glasses he kept looking at the stack, and told me that he enjoyed the view very much, and would come again. Another young Russian, a University graduate, when out at Kuntsevo, in regarding a fine sylvan vista which was quite spoiled by the presence of a circular shed with an iron smoke-stack, told me that he thought this ugly building "added to the views." Wood-covered hill and dale, a glimpse of river, a field of golden grain, these were nothing. What made the picture for him was the brick-kiln. Yet he was an educated man, wide-read, and travelled.

The memorials of the past do not appeal to the Russian because of their beauty, or their quaintness, only because of their religious or historical associations. Moscow still possesses some of the most interesting monuments of the infancy of a great nation; but the modern *Zeitgeist*, industrialism, has no use for mere memorials of the past. When the career of a penny 'bus is momentarily impeded by some antique obstruction, like, say Temple Bar, then down comes Temple Bar! A plague on all who would clog progress! Nowadays what is wanted is space and freedom for all — so that the penny 'buses may crowd upon and hinder each other. Moscow is rich in old buildings that bulk largely — the Kremlin collection for instance; they are in no sense the outcome of industrialism, are quite out of keeping with the spirit of the present age, and sooner or later may be considered to impede the natural progress of the city — some may have to go, but it is unlikely that even then the Redeemer Gate of the Kremlin will serve as the entrance lodge to the private domain of some foreign brewer at Razoomovski or Ostankina.

Industrialism has not yet taught the Russian that "Time is money." Everywhere dilatoriness is the rule; despatch the exception. In no thing is this natural trait so plain as in the arrangements for travelling. The trains are slow: there are not

enough of them: the accommodation upon them and at the station is excellent in its way but there is overcrowding in both, everywhere the congestion is chronic. Some lines are a little worse than others, but all are bad. To obtain a numbered reserved seat it is necessary to book days in advance; river steamers sometimes are booked "full," weeks ahead. It is of no use trying to purchase a ticket at a railway terminus, it must be bought beforehand at an agency — where a fee is charged — and there the queue of would-be buyers is so long that it is best to hire a person to make the purchase. Passengers, who have not a numbered seat in the train, must go to the station long before the train is ready to receive passengers. There they must engage the services of a porter who, as soon as the doors are unlocked, will struggle with other porters to get a vacant place for his employer. First-class passengers go second-class rather than not go at all; often would-be travellers are left behind for the next train owing to lack of room, and this is not on special occasions, but every day. Week in and week out it is a "bank holiday" railway rush for the ordinary passenger. "Extra coaches?" "Not without an order from head-quarters." "No room? Well, there's another train to-morrow."

The Koursk railway station of Moscow is a building of which Russia is proud. Its great size is its most remarkable feature. It possesses the usual clock tower, the plain façade, the long low wings. Hence starts the world-famous Siberian express twice a week, and the accommodation at the disposal of passengers is greater than furnished at any London terminus, whilst probably the number of persons accommodated daily is far less than the hourly arrivals at any station of the Central London Railway. The station is replete with unexpected conveniences, but the booking offices are in obscure corners and undiscoverable without a guide. There is a magnificent kiosk

for an absent banker; one, equally imposing, labelled "Interpreter," I found tenantless. Buffets were everywhere conspicuous, but not so time-tables or railway maps. At English stations there is a misnamed "Inquiry Office," where one obtains answers. In this station the authorities, with almost pedantic regard for precision, provide what they term an "Information Bureau." If fortunate to find it occupied, the only answer obtainable to inquiries is the laconic "Ne-znaiou" ("Don't know") so common in Moscow. Whilst there I noticed a troop of poor children conducted by an elderly lady and a young girl; they were going down into the country—for Moscow has an equivalent to the London Fresh Air Fund—and their immediate requirement was the whereabouts of the office for the sale of tickets at reduced rates. They tramped about that station, all of them heavily laden with bundles and encumbered with a pet dog, a go-cart, and bulky toys, but the only answer given in my hearing was "Ne-znaiou." No matter where I went I shortly heard the hurried patter of many little feet; the almost breathless repetition of the same hastily-spoken phrase, inevitably the answer "Ne-znaiou." Of course, things are much better arranged in this country; though, possibly, the same sort of thing may happen any day at Waterloo.

On an average one train arrives at or departs from New Street Station, Birmingham, every minute of the twenty-four hours' day, but the whole of the refreshment rooms there would not accommodate one train-load of passengers; moreover, they are often empty. In the Russian stations the refreshment rooms are more commodious; are always occupied, and appear to be still regarded as caravanserai. From what I saw of arrivals at the railway stations I concluded that the ordinary intending passenger, instead of going to catch any particular train, packs up his things, and, as soon as ready, goes off to the station

quite regardless of the hour, and departs by the first train that starts for his destination. I told this to a Russian friend, who said it was correct but for one particular: when the intending passenger has packed up his things, he sits down among them for half an hour or more to compose himself after the bustle of getting ready, prior to setting out for the railway station. My friend may have been joking, but the leisurely way in which Russian people travel is refreshing. On the day of my departure I asked my friend, "What time must I start from here to catch the courier on the Nikolai to-night, Vassi?" "It's all the same what time you start. Go now; go in an hour; go at six o'clock, or seven o'clock even, is early enough."

CHAPTER V

THE GREAT SIBERIAN RAILWAY

THERE is an old Russian proverb that "the nearer the Tsar the greater the danger," and from the old days of the Tsars of Muscovy Russia has been regarded by its inhabitants as a country from which to escape. In the Middle Ages fugitives from Russia were common on the west frontier, and were frequently passed without hindrance through countries at war with the Russians. In like manner some went east, especially after Yermak had shown the way. It is said that the Slav has a tendency to turn towards the east, but this is *post hoc, propter hoc*, to account for the absorption of Siberia. The reasons for the colonisation of Siberia will be stated later; here it is intended to show only how communications were extended.

First, as to the direction. The route taken by Yermak and his successors in the conquest of Siberia formed the highway into Asia, at first a track between the stockaded advance posts. As early as 1601 there were yemshchiks at Tiumen, and in 1710 these postillions there numbered, with their families, over 7000; five years later the post route extended right across Asia to the shores of Okhotsk on the Pacific, and soon afterwards the roads in Western Siberia were widened to twenty-one feet to accommodate the increasing traffic.

The natural waterways, the real roads of Russia and Siberia, were next requisitioned to develop the communications, and it

was proposed to connect the great rivers by canals, of which the Ob-Yenisei is the practical result. As early as 1843 a steamer was placed upon the Ob, only one year later than the first appearance of steam navigation on the Volga. In 1846 the steamship *Constantinople* entered the Amur from the Pacific, and in 1854 Muraviev started in his steamer *Argun* to navigate the Shilka and upper Amur.

The successes of Muraviev in the Far East were followed by many proposals for the construction of railways. In 1857 an Englishman, Dull, wished to construct a horse tramway from the terminus of the Moscow railway at Nijni-Novgorod to a port on the Pacific; and an American, Collins, a short railway from Irkutsk to Chita, and so connect the western system of waterways with the Amur route to the Far East. This latter project was favoured by Muraviev, and all the money was to be raised for the construction locally, but the Government rejected the scheme. In 1858, Morrison, Horn, and Sleigh proposed to join Moscow with a Pacific port, and carry out the work of railway construction without any pecuniary assistance from the State, but the concessions they asked were considered too onerous, and the offer was declined.

Nothing was done actually until 1875, when the necessities of the mining population in the North Ural district determined the State to construct the Perm-Tiumen railway as a possible link in a Trans-Siberian railway and an immediate connection for the basins of the rivers Volga and Ob: the line was finished in 1884 only.

In 1880 Ostrovski, a Russian engineer, pointed out that a Trans-Siberian line running over the Ishim steppe would be cheaper to construct than one following the old post road route north; would open up new country not served by navigable rivers, and not require so long a link as the Perm railway, to connect it with the Russian lines. He did not suggest a

Trans-Asian railway, but three sections to connect the navigable rivers and establish communication between the Volga and Baikal. The through route could follow, and as traced out by him is that actually taken by the railway in the zone of maximum population and of the "black-earth from the Volga to the Yenisei."

Other projects were presented by governors of provinces and private persons, but the State was not quick to act, and in 1891 had got no further than a tentative extension of the Zlatoust-Mias mineral railway to Cheliábinsk. The official recognition of the Trans-Asian line may be said to date from an order of the Emperor Alexander III., made on March 17, 1891, to the Tsarevich, to declare upon landing at Vladivostok from Japan, that an Imperial command had been given to build a continuous line of railway across Siberia, and to himself turn the first sod of this railway on the Ussuri section of the line which "is to be carried out at the cost of the State. Your participation in the achievement of this work will be a testimony to my ardent desire to facilitate communication between Siberia and the other countries of the empire, and to manifest my extreme anxiety to secure the peaceful prosperity of the country."

The inauguration ceremony commencing the work was performed on May 19, 1891, by his Imperial Majesty Nicholas II. at Pervaya Rechka, a few versts from the Golden Horn at Vladivostok.

The Trans-Caspian preceded the Trans-Siberian railway, and that railway, and, indeed, nearly all Russian lines in Asia, have been viewed as strategic, *i.e.*, built with a view to the rapid mobilisation of troops on the different frontiers of the empire. This is the English, or, rather, the Anglo-Indian view. All Russian lines serve a military purpose. In the Russian Empire, as in Germany and France, it is State policy to garrison districts with troops raised in some far distant part of the country;

those from the east go to the west, those from the north to the south, and garrisons are not allowed to remain in one district long enough to become part and parcel of the locality. There is constant movement, and these frequent changes of station are facilitated by railways, whether they are strategic or commercial. The Siberian lines were intended to open up the country; that was their primary purpose.

From the great haste with which the work has been prosecuted since the Chino-Japanese war, it also cannot be doubted that great military importance is attached to the value of complete railway communication between east and west.

The next point of importance is the material value of the line.

Much nonsense has been written respecting the "Great Siberian Railways." The lines have been over-praised; they have been ruthlessly condemned. There are poor sections; none is either very good or very bad; some are much better than others. Altogether, it is just a light railway — nothing more. The gauge is five feet; the rails weigh from forty-two to forty-eight pounds the yard; they are too light for the heavy engines and rolling-stock of the State railways. They ought to be seventy-four pounds to the yard as was specified, and used on the eastern sections. Some, instead of being hard rail-steel, are soft, and the weight of a heavy train passing strains them beyond the point of elasticity and they do not recover, but remain sunk between the sleepers. On one curve, it is said that a certain rail is crushed every time the "express" passes, the buckling of the web of the rail renders it useless, and it has to be replaced by a new one each time, that is, four rails each week. Generally, the rails are just able to sustain the weight at slow speeds, and no more.

The embankments are too narrow and too steep, the cuttings the same, the sleepers too soft and too thin. As a

THE USUAL ACCIDENT ON THE GREAT SIBERIAN RAILWAY

narrow-gauge railway little fault would have been found, but its staunchest champions admit that it is inferior to the average railways in European Russia. There are sections which ought to be perfect, according to theory. That is to say, that by the engineering text-books the embankments are at the right angle, the sleepers are close enough together, and the rails strong enough to carry the weight. Everything has been accurately calculated; but everything, too, has been made just as specified in the calculated minimum, and no margin allowed for possible differences of soil and material. Consequently there are, and always will be, subsidences of the track, falls of loose earth in the cuttings, and spreading of the rails; therefore delays to the traffic which even the proposed re-ballasting of the track with broken stone will not prevent.

The speed of the trains can never be great. Short trains with a light load like the Siberian Express may be able to average twenty miles an hour; the heavier, ordinary trains do not often exceed twelve miles the hour, whilst the heavy goods trains rumble along like traction engines on a country road. The express is the safest train by which to travel; the long freight trains bring down the falls of earth and cause subsidences of the track, and so themselves sometimes come to grief. The expresses are merely delayed by having to wait for the track to be cleared. From these strictures certain sections may be exempted, as of a more solid character.

The Trans-Asian railway consists of five different sections, the Western Siberian from the Urals to Ob, the Central Siberian from Ob to Irkutsk, the Trans-Baikalian from Irkutsk to the Manchurian frontier, the Eastern Chinese across Manchuria, the Ussuri from Pogranichnaya to Vladivostok. To make a through route these have yet to be connected by the Circum-Baikal line round the southern shores of the lake.

The total length of the railway from St. Petersburg to

Vladivostok was estimated at something less than 10,000 versts and the cost of the portions to be constructed in order to join the East with the existing railway system of Russia at five hundred million roubles. By taking the southern route through Manchuria, the railway ought to be about a thousand versts shorter, but actually the distance to Vladivostok will be 8637 versts, or about 5700 miles, and the money already spent, or in course of being spent on the railway with its branch to Port Arthur, is a thousand million roubles or over one hundred million sterling.

There is one short branch line of forty-eight miles from Taiga Junction to Tomsk, the capital of Siberia, and others are projected, but there will not be any other development north of the trunk line for years, notwithstanding the claims put forward by the inhabitants of the Tobolsk province for a railway continuing the Ekaterinburg-Tiumen line by way of Ishmin and Tiukalinsk to Omsk through an agricultural district, thus making a large loop, eventually to be united by the Perm-Kotlas railway with the Russian railways, and so give another, more northern, route from the capital to Siberia. Other plans are of greater importance; the agricultural districts south of the railway are richer than those to the north, but first, branches will be run to the gold fields. In a very short time the most important branch, that through Mongolia towards Pekin, will be completed; long before its completion it will have intercepted the caravan tracks and deviated the traffic in tea from the old road and river routes to Muscovy. Other branches will reach the mineral regions of the upper Yenisei, the Vitim gold fields, and tap the valley of the Zeya. A branch line is wanted between some port on the Sea of Okhotsk and Yakutsk, and it is even suggested that a line shall run to the far north-east and connect with the American railways by a line to be built through Alaska to Cape Nome.

Before long many crudities of the existing trunk line will have been improved. It will not be necessary for the locomotives to take reserves of water in tubs on trucks; or for it to be pumped a half mile, or more, to tanks; the line will be properly ballasted; there will not be falls of earth down the banks every time a train passes; with the settlement and subsequent drainage of the lands adjacent to the railways the subsidences caused by flood water will cease.

State railways may be expected to cost more than private undertakings, but then the work should be better done. Work of the best class is not conspicuous on the Siberian railways, but Americans, who remember the completion of the Union Pacific line, say that the track is no worse than the first put down in the United States, and that is the highest praise I heard from experts competent to form a just opinion. On the other side Russians are not slow to recount instances of jobbery in connection with the construction of the railway, of which the most flagrant instance perhaps is that of the contractor who made his embankment of snow instead of earth, so that when the thaw came, by which time he had been paid, the track subsided four feet throughout the length of his section.

Again, the whole principle of railway building is primitive and costly. For the greater part of its length the track runs across practically level ground, and the bank is raised by digging a ditch corresponding in depth and width to the embankment. When a cutting has to be made, the earth therefrom is piled on both sides of the banks, and not used to make the embankments. In fact such tools as excavators and tip-waggons do not appear to have been used at all, nor are they employed in the construction of the Eastern Chinese railway.

It is an all-Russian line, and if it has cost much more to construct than would have been the case had the work been

given to foreign contractors, the Russians have gained what they needed badly, — practical experience in carrying through engineering work of the first order. In this way, if in no other, the State benefits, but the value of the individual experience is to some extent lost to the State, owing to the fact that the continuation of the work of covering the East with a net-work of lines is entrusted to new hands. Instead of employing the men who have gained their experience at the cost of the State, those now engaged are, with few exceptions, young engineers fresh from the technical colleges. On the other hand, it must be allowed that the railway presented no very serious engineering difficulties; severe winter weather was the most troublesome element. Nowhere has the line a long tunnel completed, or a bridge like that over the Kishta or the Forth; when it is not running on a dead level, it winds like a serpent or a mountain railway over hill passes, and the few cuttings through rock would be trifles for the engineers of such a line as the Cambrian railway. The Trans-Siberian railway is great only in its length, and by reason of the purposes it is intended to serve.

The trains on the Siberian lines are all crowded. In the express trains are travellers doing the tour round the world, officials going to distant posts, the wives and children of officers stationed in Manchuria, a few commercials, and some experts or savants. Then there is the post train each day. This takes, in the first class: officials, commercials, and traders working from town to town; second class: the wealthier artisans and traders migrating towards the sunrise; third class: free immigrants and settlers. Another train of second, third, and fourth class passenger, and goods waggons conveys the officers of the immigration department, free and State-aided settlers. There are special trains for the military, police, and convicts, for goods and railway construction material.

THROUGH THE SIBERIAN TAIGA

A TYPICAL SIBERIAN RAILWAY SETTLEMENT

On all trains there is greater comfort than one expects to find; even the third-class passengers have a place for their bedding, and the fourth have broad, rough benches and shelves which serve the same purpose. The trains are kept clean, the service is good; in short the working staff of the line are competent men efficiently directed and controlled, and travelling by train in Siberia is more comfortable than it is in Russia.

The Siberian is a pioneer railway; it cannot have any large traffic until the country it traverses becomes more settled. It has no loop lines nor branch lines of importance; it does not compete with the river ways, nor is it largely served by them; neither has it diverted any considerable traffic, excepting perhaps the trade in European sea-borne goods to Krasnoyarsk by the discarded Kara sea route, and a share of the caravan trade from Turkestan.

Compared with English and European railways, and even with the State lines in Russia, the traffic is numerically unimportant. Excluding the military, the passengers numbered 66,000 in 1898, and in 1899 only 56,000; in 1900, owing to the disturbed state of Manchuria, the number increased both ways. People left and subsequently returned to Eastern Siberia. In 1901 the mining traffic diminished. The goods traffic amounted to 584,000 tons in 1898, and 639,000 tons in 1899. The gross receipts average less than £700 per mile per annum. It is, therefore, ridiculous to contend that a double track is necessary. The Perm-Tiumen line, the only other railway in Siberia, is also single track, but it carries over a million passengers yearly, and its gross receipts are over £1000 per mile per annum.

It must be remembered that the trunk line is far from being a commercial success, and is even worked at a loss. Taking the actual cost of the sections opened at 780 million roubles only, the interest on the bonds requires 33¾ million roubles annually. The actual receipts for 1899 were a little over

17 millions, and the working expenses just under 20 millions. When the line is completed, the working expenses of the whole route from Cheliábinsk to Vladivostok and Dalny will be not less than five million pounds sterling a year, and for many years there must be a deficit of receipts to cover even working expenses.

If the passenger fares are low, the goods freights are high, yet return only 15 copeeks per pood of 36 lbs. conveyed. Of the 200 million poods carried, only about one-fifth was genuine commercial freight, the balance being railway and military material and goods conveyed for the Government account. In 1902, as twice previously, the line has been closed for a period to all commercial traffic, being required for Government purposes exclusively, and this when, instead of 40 millions, at least 600 million poods of genuine commercial goods should be taken each year in order to pay the working expenses and interest on the capital covered by Government bonds.

The railway is staffed by 14,728 persons, and the official return gives the rolling-stock as: 751 locomotives, 548 passenger and 7743 goods waggons, 33 mail-vans, etc., but the number of each has been increased by recent large additions; though it is hinted that on the stock-taking visits of the inspector, by altering with white paint the numbers on the trucks and sending them on ahead, whilst the inspector is detained, many have been counted twice or oftener.

The Siberia opened up to Russians by the railway is a land of much promise; it is not the Eldorado some picture it, nor is it the desolate waste Siberia is generally considered. Nowhere throughout its whole length does it cross or approach barren land. The Siberia of the railway, possibly the pick of the vast regions in Russian Asia, is just plain, common-place country, such as one expects to find in any great British colony, and its like can be found far to north and south of the actual tract traversed. It must be admitted that the country does impress the

beholder favourably. The neat railway settlements, composed of large immigrant homes, schools, picturesque churches — built out of the Alexander III. memorial fund — substantial and commodious dwellings, the mills, stores, and station buildings are not properly representative of Siberia, but of the new, better free colonies the Russian State is doing its utmost to plant all over the fertile regions of Northern Asia. In time other railways will be wanted, but at present Siberia wants men, and it wants those men badly.

CHAPTER VI

THE OVERLAND ROUTE TO THE FAR EAST

OF all claims made for the Great Siberian railway the strongest is that it affords an overland route to the Far East. It may not be a better route, a safer, or even a quicker way, but as an alternative to the sea route it commands the attention of travellers and is of world-wide interest.

Some consideration therefore must be given to the Trans-European and Trans-Asian lines as constituting a means of direct communication between China or Japan and Western Europe, and this from the points of view of the hurrying business man, and the leisurely tourist. In what time can the journey be done, at what cost, and what is there on the way worth stopping to examine. Further, the journey must be considered with the present conditions, and with such modifications as will result from the connection of the different lines and the institution of a through service.

The tourist will appreciate a few hints. The best season for the journey is September; the next-best month June. The direct route is by Flushing to Berlin, then on by way of Warsaw and Smolensk to Moscow, whence the Siberian express runs through to Irkutsk. If it is not desired to break the journey unnecessarily, London must be left by the night train on Sunday, or Wednesday, preferably with a through ticket to Moscow and baggage registered to that town. It is an uninteresting journey from Flushing to Berlin, as all who have

made it know well, but the traveller has before him thirty such wearisome days. A fairly good restaurant car is on the train from Cologne, and of this the passenger should take advantage east of Oberhausen. The train should be left at the Zoologischer Garten station of the Stadt-Bahn in Berlin and, if the next train on is taken, a drive across Warsaw can be avoided. Refreshments are served on this train, but there is no restaurant car. The frontier is reached at 1.30 A.M.; the train starts on an hour and a half later, and arrives at Warsaw at 8 A.M. The sleeping carriages are then attached to a short train which runs by the loop line across the Vistula to the Brest station, and from this line there is a good view of the fortifications defending the capital of old Poland. Passengers must then change trains, as on the Brest-Moscow line the gauge is the Russian Standard, five feet, instead of the European gauge 4.8. Brest-Litovsk, one of the most important fortresses in the Government of Poland, is reached at two o'clock. The line, after crossing the now partly drained swamps of the Minsk, enters forest which is similar to the Taiga of Central Siberia. Years ago, when there was but one line, the journey through the section was primitive and uninteresting. Passengers turned out about seven in the morning and washed themselves on the platform in basins provided by the peasant women who came there with their ewers of water; now, although the service is much accelerated, it is possible that the train arriving at Stolbtsi on the eve of a Saint's day, will be detained there whilst the conductors and other officials attend service at a chapel on the platform. Most interesting are the peasants of White Russia, in undyed clothes and bast shoes, seen at the stations.

Moscow is reached at 2.45 P.M. and a drive must be made to the Koursk station, from which the train will depart the same evening at 9.35 P.M.

Through tickets must be obtained in advance to avoid delay and at present are not issued beyond Irkutsk. There are seven trains working the service, of which five are of the usual type run by the International Sleeping Car Company, the two others — the first and second Siberian trains, each of which cost £12,000 — are the luxuriously fitted expresses made known by the Paris Exhibition of 1900. These two last special trains consist of five carriages. Next to the locomotive, a baggage and service waggon; then, the restaurant car and offices; a second-class carriage; the first-class saloon; a second-class carriage, combined with an observation car. All are connected with covered gangways; and are provided with vestibules and double windows and doors.

In the centre of the first-class car there is a small saloon, with table, lounge, comfortable arm-chairs, and the usual cross-seats. At each end are compartments for two and four passengers, shut off from the gangway by curtains, whilst other coupés, for two and four persons respectively, have doors. Both first and second class berths are equally well fitted, the upholstery covered with the best leather, and the seats convertible into beds by raising the backs and using the bedding, pillows, and coverlets provided. Except on the trains which have the observation car first-class, there is little to choose between first and second class, as all the additional accommodation provided is at the disposal of every passenger.

The restaurant car has tables of different sizes to accommodate a person travelling alone, or a party of six; meals are served from 8 A.M. to 10 P.M. local time, including a *table d'hôte* dinner of four courses for a rouble and a quarter, or less than three shillings. The fare varies in quality; the *chef* and kitchen staff of one train being superior to others, but that of only one train was noticeably inferior last year. In the saloon of the restaurant there is a piano, and sheets of music; a

library of a couple of hundred books, including French, German, and English books on Russia, Siberia, and the Far East; Russian fiction and periodical literature. Chess, draughts, and other table games are provided; cards may be played until 11 P.M., and each compartment has a detachable convertible card and dining table, with a pillar-standard electric lamp which is hung up out of the way by day. The bath — hot or cold — costs three roubles; a charge is made for the home-trainer on which the cyclist may pedal, and the "exerciser" for those who do not wish their body muscles to rest.

A lavatory is converted into a dark room fitted with ruby electric lamp, for the benefit of photographers, who may also have the use of a cabinet of trays, measures, fixing baths, and other apparatus free of charge.

The heating apparatus is efficient, and under complete control by regulators in each compartment. Thermometers are fixed inside each car and others outside. The ventilation is not so thorough, but in summer the temperature is reduced by admitting a down draught of cool air from the ice boxes carried on the roof of the dining car and over the first-class saloon. The fittings of all the cars are excellent, the metal work electro-plated, and the panelling of the choicest veneers; in short, the trains are such as the public in other countries has not the privilege of using, being in most respects equal to the special trains reserved in Western Europe for the sole use of Royalty. Everything that can reasonably be expected is found in these trains, and the critic will search in vain for faults.

The service is good; a bell in each compartment will summon a waiter from the restaurant, or bring one of the car attendants. In addition there is a master-of-the-train, an official of station-master's rank, to supervise the staff of attendants and cleaners, the guards, conductors, and controllers, and keep the running up to the scheduled time.

There are few hotels in Russia, and none in Siberia, where the foreign traveller will be so comfortable as upon the Siberian express; and the pity is that at present the accommodation is not available beyond Irkutsk, a seven days' journey from Moscow.

Riajsk is reached by breakfast-time the first morning. During the night the train has passed Tula, the Birmingham of Russia, and gone through some of the best agricultural districts of Great Russia. Some straw-thatched and poor-looking villages may be noticed, but the line is nearing the steppe region, and now most conspicuous are the hurdle-fences which serve as snow screens and run parallel to the line all across the steppes. Penza, a centre of camel cloth weaving, is reached at nightfall, and in the small hours the Volga is crossed by a bridge 1520 yards long.

Samara, the centre of the grain district, is reached at half-past six, and from here to the western slopes of the Ural is excellent grain land, and prairie. Wooden windmills vary the monotony of the wide plains. At the stations, Mordva peasants and Bashkir graziers and nomads will be easily distinguishable from the Russian settlers and German colonists. Rye is the principal crop grown, but there is good wheat land, and the country is developing rapidly.

Possibly a cloud of dust on the steppe will be approached close enough for the passengers to see that it is produced by immense herds of cattle being driven to fresh pastures. Beyond Samara, the land is more park-like, the plain broken with round-topped hills, the ridges wooded with birch and clumps of large trees. In the cuttings the "black soil" will be seen to extend to a depth of three feet, lying on sand and limestone. In this district there are many "funnels" formed by subsidence of the surface earth. The strata of the Permian formation abound in cavities, and after the spring floods there is often a sinking of

THE RUSSIAN STEPPE

THE URALS, BETWEEN UST-KAOV AND KROPACHEVO

the surface, sometimes burying a ploughman and his team. A large funnel is near the line, close to Voronki; it measures thirty yards across and is about seventy feet deep at its centre. The hills have caves, many superposed and connected by galleries.

Some of the villages are thatched, others are very straggling among clumps of trees with shingle roofs. The population is very mixed. There are the Mordva and Cheremys, of Finnish race; Chuvashes, mountain and plain Bashkirs of Tartar stock, living apart and farming in different fashions. Some are still nomads, at least in summer, and crowd the stations offering fresh and boiled milk, curds, and kumys to the passengers. The ploughing is done by some with one small horse, by others with three yoke of oxen: the milch cows are generally tethered.

From Kinel the ascent of the Ural Highlands begins by easy gradients; these do not exceed 0.01 as far as Ufa, where the mountainous region is entered. The line winds through hill passes, often along a small stream amongst scenery recalling in some places that of the Welsh borderland, in others that of Luxemburg. This section is passed in the night, and the traveller will see nothing of the gold and iron mining centres or the small manufacturing towns of the Urals, until reaching Viazovaya about 7.30 A.M. local time. The scheduled time for the run of 120 miles from Ufa is six and a half hours by the express and eight and a half by ordinary trains; over some sections having a gradient of only 0.0085 the trains are scheduled to run less than 12 miles in the hour. A few versts from Zlato-ust, reached before midday local time, is a short tunnel through a chalk formation. This is probably the first tunnel passed, not only in Russia, but in the whole run through from Flushing, nearly 3000 miles away, and there is no other until Irkutsk is passed, 2000 miles further on. The absence of

tunnels is due to the flatness of the country traversed, and the principle of railway construction, which is different to that followed in England. Where British engineers would drive a line straight, make a cutting, raise an embankment, or bore a tunnel, Russian engineers make a railway which by easy grades and many tortuous windings will pass over or round obstacles and sink by the same circumvolutions to the level of the great plains.

About twelve miles east of Zlato-ust, near Urjumka station, the line attains its greatest elevation, and by sharp curves almost zigzags to the top of the ridge, crossing itself and forming irregular loops, some of the curves having a maximum radius of only 350 yards. On a small stone pyramid by the line, "Europe" is engraved on the west face, and "Asia" on the east, then the line runs down through Syrostan and Mias to Cheliábinsk, which is reached shortly after five o'clock local time.

The valley of the Urals, and the Alexander peak, 3500 feet, are picturesque but in no sense grand or magnificent. The most characteristic view is near Kropachevo, passed about 6 P.M.; the most beautifully situated town, Zlato-ust, named after St. John Chrysostom to whom Mosolov, a Moscow merchant, the founder of the town, erected a church in 1754. The iron works now belong to the State; the larger ones at Viazovaya, and others in the vicinity, to the Beloselski-Belozerski family.

The hills are well wooded with fir, pine, spruce, birch, limes, and oaks; bears are plentiful. On the eastern slopes the oak disappears; the black earth is found only in the valleys, and there the vegetation is rich. Away from the mountains the layer is thin, affording excellent pasture, which further to the south-east becomes prairie, the steppes merging with sandy desert insufficiently watered and abounding in salt and bitter lakes fast disappearing. The lake edges are

ALONG A RIVER-BED, TYPICAL SIBERIAN SCENERY

A SETTLEMENT IN CENTRAL SIBERIA

covered with reeds, and around the edges salt-wort (*saliscornia herbaria*) grows in profusion.

Cheliabinsk, the terminus of the West-Siberian railway, is the first Siberian town reached, and is a junction for the line to Ekaterinburg which connects with Tiumen and the River Tobol, the heart of old Siberia. It was founded in 1658 and named after the Baskir, Cheliab, from whom the land was acquired. It was attacked by Pugachev's followers, but has no other historical associations, and few antiquities. Although there is good stone in abundance near, the houses are of wood, the roads unmade and unpaved. There is an immense granary, some large grain mills, and a distillery. The fairs in May and October are largely attended; some 80,000 sheep are slaughtered annually, and the tanneries and tallow works complete the industries of the town, which is of greatest importance as the registering centre for Siberian immigrants, for whose accommodation huge barracks, hospitals, and stores have been erected. In early summer the station and town are thronged with peasants from every part of European Russia, but there is no hotel accommodation for tourists.

The first section of the line in Siberia skirts the Khirgis, Ishim, and Baraba steppes, and the country is not at all like the Siberia of convention.

The intention of the projectors of the railway being to open up new country, the line does not follow the old post road for any considerable distance. It does not run from town to town — even Tomsk, the capital of Siberia, is served only by a branch line some forty-eight miles long — and therefore as a tourist route it is disappointing. There is plenty of interest to see in Siberia, but not from the railway. For the following reason. Central Asia, from the Urals to Lake Baikal, is a shallow basin grooved with old waterways. Along these waterways, but above the present level of floodwater from existing streams,

the line proceeds uniformly. For thousands of miles the passenger's view is restricted to a portion of a particular valley. There is no wide expanse of open country, no bird's-eye glimpse of Siberia from the top of an elevated plateau or ridge. The Siberian is a railway in a long, wide ditch, and the line slinks from watershed to watershed through shallow cuttings which shut off from the passenger in the observation car all views except the dreary permanent way with its scanty borderland of forest clearings and railway settlements.

The soil is sandy, or marshy where the sub-soil is clayey; the vegetation diminutive, for the forest land has been converted into steppe, and what growth there is consists of young birch, dwarf-cherry, and willow wood. There are shallow pools and lakes fast drying up, and sluggish rivers in process of conversion to lakes. There is spring sown wheat, but the country is given chiefly to stock raising, and some excellent pasturage will be noticed in patches — the parts of the old river beds covered by the flood water in spring.

There are villages and towns on the route, but as it was not for them the line was constructed the stations are so far distant that it seems a mockery to name them after the settlements. In fact, the stations like the sidings, are made at regular intervals, and the propinquity of a town appears to be accidental. Where, as at Petropavlovsk, the railway necessarily skirts the town, the station is placed, not at the nearest convenient place to the town itself, but at a point some miles away, from which the town can scarcely be seen. This appears to be wilful not accidental, the object apparently being to run a line through unsettled country, with stations all alike, to accommodate immigrants. Repairing shops, engine and waggon works, offices and other necessary establishments, are stationed at the points most convenient for the railway, not because the spot is near a town or river, near coal or iron. Old Siberia, existing Siberia,

NACHALNIK'S RESIDENCE AT OB

has been disregarded. Evidently it is expected that the line will make the country, and the new settlements will be on virgin soil, apart from those sections of the country already inhabited.

At present the most picturesque objects are the many small windmills, and the people. At a railway crossing the guard may be a Russian soldier in uniform, holding in one hand his rifle with bayonet fixed, in the other the green signal flag; here and there may be seen women labourers ballasting the track with stone. At the sidings settlers — the relatives of railway labourers — will offer for sale milk, bread, and farm produce; Bashkir, Kalmuk, Khirgis, and nomad graziers idling about the line and stations regard the train and its occupants with stoical indifference and betray no symptom of curiosity.

Kurgan, as its name implies, marks the site of an enormous barrow of which no vestige remains. The district is not without archæological interest, but the memorials of antiquity have not been identified and little is known of the people who occupied the country before the Tartar inroads. At present the region is peopled chiefly by the descendants of the hordes of Asiatics who in mediæval days so frequently invaded Russia and Europe, to return beyond the Urals before superior force, or to carry away the spoils gained.

At Petropavlovsk there is an old caravanserai and barter court, where formerly much of the trade between east and west was transacted. The town has not now the commercial importance it had, but does a thriving trade in animal products. From here to Ob the line runs close to the old southern frontier of the Russian Empire now extended to the Pamirs some 1200 miles further south.

Omsk is reached the evening after leaving Cheliabinsk, the distance of 493 miles being accomplished by the express, averaging less than twenty miles an hour, in twenty-five and a half hours, and by the post train in thirty hours. The town is

on the opposite bank of the river, which joins the Irtish at this point. It is a good trading centre and was formerly a point of strategic importance and the capital of Siberia, but now is the chief administrative town of the steppe country, and has large railway workshops. The old gate is the sole object of antiquarian interest, but the church has a banner of Yermak, and the old court prison was immortalised by Dostoievski as the "Dead House" in which he served four years' hard labour with the poet Durov.

The night run is through swampy country where in summer insect pests are very annoying. Kainsk, a third-class station on the old Post Road, is reached in the early morning; the lakes in the vicinity swarm with fish — pike, carp, bream, and perch principally — and from one lake, Chany, twelve to sixteen tons are taken yearly. Much of the water is brackish and unwholesome. The country is level, broken by birch copses, swampy and uninteresting. The old high road from Muscovy to the Far East, along which convicts and exiles marched on their long journey north, and the old travellers made their visits to Pekin, crosses the railway at Chulun, and frequently afterwards. Ob, the terminus of the section, is reached about 5.30 P.M. The Ob is an important trading and distributing route, agricultural immigrants are flocking to the Barnaul-Biisk districts south, and the river has canal communication with the Yenisei and over 15,000 versts of navigable inland waterways.

The next section, the Central Siberian, comprises woodlands, the immense *taiga*, or virgin forest, with which so much of the temperate region is covered. It is hilly; low spurs of the Altai run almost to the railway, and the train makes slower progress. The speed is fourteen miles an hour over some sections, seventeen over others, and this exclusive of all stoppages. Taiga station, the junction for Tomsk, the Siberian capital, is reached at 2 A.M., and Mariinsk, a chief dis-

trict town, about breakfast-time. Krasnoyarsk, on the Yenisei, is reached at midnight.

The *taiga* is swampy, and, at any rate near the line, does not contain any large timber. The trees — fir, red fir, and birch — are small, and the undergrowth though thick, does not attain any great height. There are many clearings, some due to forest fires, and in places these "yelans" are grown over with fine birch in clumps, and afford the most suitable land for agricultural allotments. Generally the outlook is gloomy. Tree covered rolling hills in the distance; small timber — much of it dead, barked, and burnt — near the line, and a corduroy road parallel to the track is now disused and rotting, here and there sunk into the swamp, in other places overgrown with shrub and creepers. One of the prettiest stations was Kemchug, near the gold-bearing river of that name, but now that the trees have been felled and the stumps only left, it has a desolate appearance. Near, is a sand cliff which was cut into when the line was made; owing to a fall of cliff the railway has now to make a detour. The section shows the bare margin for wear and subsidence allowed by its constructors. The gradients are steep, 0.15, and some of the curves have a maximum radius of 280 yards only.

The town of Krasnoyarsk was founded in the beginning of the seventeenth century. Recently, when the North Sea passage to the Yenisei was discovered by Captain Wiggins, it appeared that the town had a glorious future, but a few years ago developments were stayed, and it is apparent that the "boom" is over.

The next town of importance is Kansk, formerly a stockaded post, erected 1604. It lies on low ground, subject to floods from the Kan, and is developing slowly even for a Siberian town, its most promising trade being in pressed hay. This mid-Siberian region, with its mosquitoes, many insect pests, numerous swamps, dead woods, stunted growths, and primitive

agriculture, is quite uninteresting. Away from the line into the Altai range there is better country; gold mines worked by small proprietors, good farm land, fine sporting districts, and many pretty dells, cascades, and picturesque rocks and cliffs. Along the Oka, fifteen miles to the north of the line, are cliffs on which are prehistoric figures different to any found in Western Europe so far as known.

There is very picturesque country in the valley of the Upper Uda, and its tributary the Uk, which has twelve cascades, and along its banks limestone cliffs with many caverns. The station of Nijni-Udinsk is passed soon after midnight; the town is of no importance. Beyond, the run is over flat land, the line crossing the old Siberian highway many times. Tulun is a large trading village interested in transport to the Lena valley, being on the route to the Vitim and Olekminsk Goldfields. At 11.30 P.M. the train reaches Irkutsk, its terminus; the journey of 2011 miles from Cheliabinsk having averaged 17.7 miles the hour. The influence of the Siberian line is proved by the running of the same train in European Russia, where it averages a speed of 21.7 miles an hour; in both cases the Ural section is eliminated from the computation.

Irkutsk is the greatest and most characteristic of the exile made towns of Siberia. It has many philanthropic institutions, a capital local museum, and good library. The streets are not made, the market place is a muddy hollow, or a dust driven horror, and there is little of real interest to detain the traveller. A stay of eleven hours must be made, and it is useless to seek a resting place on the railway side of the river. Of the hotels the Metropole, Russia, and Deko are the best, but Irkutsk is one of the towns sufficiently near the goldfields to be corrupted by their influence just as is Tomsk. Human life and money are held cheap in Irkutsk, but the Russian attempts to paint the town red would make an American gold digger tired and

STATION ON THE SIBERIAN RAILWAY

BOW OF THE ICE-BREAKER *BAIKAL*

an Australian smile. The through traveller may spend his few hours to best advantage in obtaining the bare necessaries for the remaining portion of his journey, which, for some time yet, will have to be made in Siberian fashion, as elsewhere described. An enamelled iron teapot or *chainik* is the first requisite; excellent Chinese tea can be bought of the Chinamen in the Soldatenskaya; sugar, salt, some tinned meats, sardines, a few pounds of sausages and English biscuits, comprise all that is really necessary. The complete picnic-basket sets are convenient, but London made goods are too conspicuously English and provoke trouble. For bedding a square of the loosely felted Mongolian wool is the softest and cheapest article to acquire.

There is but one train a day eastward: it leaves at 10.30 A.M. local time, and if, as sometimes happens, the bridge is closed, two hours are required to cross to the railway side by way of the ferry. The run to Baikal is only forty-one miles, and, with but one stopping place, takes three hours and three quarters to accomplish.

At the date of writing the Circum-Baikal railway is not even commenced, but a beginning will soon be made. It will have a total length of 180 miles in a hilly country, necessitating the construction of many bridges and no less than seven tunnels, of which the longest will be just over two miles. It is therefore improbable that the section will be open for traffic until some years have elapsed. In the meantime the summer traffic is conveyed across the lake from Baikal to Mysovaya by two ice-breaking ferry-boats constructed by Messrs. Armstrong. Of these, *Baikal*, the larger, can carry trains of twenty-five waggons run on to its deck, but the custom is for this steamer to be used for the conveyance of troops and goods waggons, passengers going in the smaller, and usually over-crowded, little steamer *Angara*. The passage is made in about five hours; and in fine weather, which is somewhat rare on the lake in

summer, is very enjoyable, commanding excellent views of the curious rock formation through which burst the river Angara, the only outlet from the lake into which four large rivers empty themselves, and of the volcanic range and mountain peaks of the Baikal Mountains to the east.

In the winter the ferry is not always kept open by the ice-breakers, and the lake must be crossed by sledge. As the distance is too great for a single stage, a post-station with buffet is erected on the ice.

There is a custom house at Misovaya for the examination of all baggage and goods going westward. The express leaves at 11.30 P.M., the post train at 1.30 A.M., and there is little to choose between them, for the *train de luxe* does not run beyond Irkutsk, and the express is like the ordinary trains of Russia, comfortable enough, but not luxurious.

The first station of importance is the Verkhne-Udinsk, a trading and industrial town on the rivers Uda and Selenga. It is a possible rival to Irkutsk, owing to its position on the Selenga, a river navigable into Mongolia, and so the route for much Chinese produce. From here also will run that great branch of the Siberian railway which it is proposed to construct, *viâ* Kiakhta across the desert of Gobi to Pekin. The January fair is large; business transacted thereat amounting to a quarter of a million sterling.

The Trans-Baikal railway is more interesting than the Siberian sections of the line. The principle of construction is the same; the utilisation to the most extreme point of the old waterways, but, the country being hilly, the views are not only more picturesque, but more extensive. The country is tinged with the east. Chinese, Mongols—especially Buriats—are seen at the stations, and the Trans-Baikalian Cossacks are a distinct caste, half-soldier, half-settler, but not at all pioneer.

In the afternoon the interesting exile settlement of Petrovski-

THE BAIKAL ICE-BREAKER *ANGARA*

NATIVES AT A SIBERIAN STATION

Zavod is reached. These ironworks were established in 1790 with a view to supplying the Government mines with the material required for their working, and, in addition to criminal convicts, political exiles volunteered to work in them. The inner town is practically a State settlement still; the suburbs contain a railway constructing department likely to be employed to its full extent for many years.

Between Sokhodno and Yablonovaya is the second existing tunnel on the Siberian railway. It is very short, and really little more than a permanent snow-shed against a cliff of the Yablonovy range. On the west side is inscribed "To the Pacific," on the east "To the Atlantic." The line here crosses the mountain range, and has attained a height of 1750 feet above Lake Baikal, 3311 feet above the sea. The descent on the eastern side is very steep, a gradient of 0.017, with curves of a maximum radius of 370 yards. When going west the express is allowed one hour and a half to make the ascent, a distance of fourteen miles. Just beyond Ingoda two seams of lignite are being worked, and there is plenty of iron-stone in the district.

Chita, the next town of importance, has two stations. One, on the bank of the river of the same name, where a new settlement is being formed opposite the town. The other adjoins the old Cossack post on the Kaidalovka brook. A stockade in the sixteenth century, it was but a poor village of a score of huts in 1825, when by administrative order it was made a place of banishment. The political exiles drained the marsh, filled in swamps, and by the expenditure of their money made the town a trading centre. The Damskaya, or Ladies' Street, is so named after the wives of the Dekabrists, who followed their husbands into exile, and there are other memorials of the Volkhonskis, Trubetskois, Muriavevs, and Naryshkins. The population is now over 12,000, but developments are stayed by the Cossack administration, which is unsuited to municipal

extension, whilst nearly the whole of the town lands and freeholds in the vicinity are entailed upon Cossack settlers.

The Trans-Siberian line runs only some 230 miles beyond Chita, Stretensk on the Shilka, at the head of the Amur navigation, being its present, and probable, terminus. Sixty-seven miles east of Chita is Kitaiski Raz-yezd, or Chinese siding, the starting point of the existing railway to the Far East.

The station is four versts from Kaidalovo, a Cossack post on the old Moscow highway, and offers no accommodation. It is always thronged with passengers and would-be passengers, and at present all trains arrive at and leave the station by night. The express reaches the siding at 11.30 P.M., the post train at 1.40 A.M., the trains from the east at 11.32 P.M. and 4.40 A.M. local time; and the one train, third class only, leaves the junction for the Chinese frontier about midnight. According to the latest time table, the running has been altered, so that the bi-weekly express from Irkutsk reaches Karymskaya, 13 versts west of the junction, at four in the afternoon, and the station has been enlarged to accommodate the Manchurian passengers. It is probably but a temporary alteration until a station can be built at the junction. The express bound west leaves at midnight.

The line crosses the Ingoda by a bridge nearly 200 yards in length, and traverses the ridge between the valleys of the Ingoda and Aga and at the sixteenth mile crosses the Mira. Then the Aga, Khila, Onon, and Turga, whose waters run into the Shilka, are passed in succession. The first station of importance is Buriatskaya near large Buriat village of Byrket.

The land is open prairie, further to the south the steppe merges with the desert of Gobi, but seen from the line has every appearance of being agriculturally productive, with a thin crust of "black earth" on a sandy subsoil. The two-humped Bactrian camel is plentiful; and when the Tsunguruk valley is

THE RAILWAY BRIDGE OVER THE NONNI NEAR TSITSIKAR

left for the ascent of the Adun-Chelan mountain range, the slopes are covered with mixed herds of small oxen and ponies, camels, Mongolian sheep and goats. The population is almost entirely Buriat, grazier nomads who resort to the village settlements in winter only. There are a few Cossack colonies, but the settlers are not very numerous, and mostly are engaged in cattle raising. The military element is centred at Chindan, the fortress on the Onon, about twenty-five miles from the station of Old Chindan, 130 miles from the junction. Beyond this, to the Chinese frontier, the country is hilly, with few trees save where the Siberian willow grows under near the streams and in the hollows of the round-topped, grass-covered hills. Sibir is the name of the last station, 212 miles from the Siberian main line, and close to the Chinese frontier town Nagadan, on a low hill range to the south. The other stations on this section are called Aga, Oboviannaya, Borzia, Khara-Nor (Black Lake), Dauria, Matsievskaya, and other names not referring to native villages or natural features. The terminus is Manchuria, 18½ versts past the Siberian frontier, and here the Russians now have their custom house, and examine baggage from the east, as they do also at Mysovaya. So far as I know there is no Chinese custom house on the railway route, similar to the one existing at Maimachin, on the Kiakhta-Pekin road.

The country beyond is quite flat, marshy, and uninteresting, a focussing point of streams from the Lakes Dalai and Buiin Nor, the Khailar and Kerulen, which feed the Argun. Twelve miles further is Manchuria Station, the western terminus of the Eastern Chinese railway, on a dreary, flat plain, and within a few versts of Abagaitu, a frontier post on the great Pekin highway. Dalai-nor, Tsagan, Kharkonte, Ongun, and Kukunor are unimportant stopping places within the first hundred miles. There is a range of hills to the north, the population is scanty, and the country is being settled by Russian immigrants.

Khailar, a once important town, is 115 miles from the frontier, and the Chinese town is about a mile from the station of that name. The Chinese city was taken by the Russians in 1900, and only a few Mongols were left in the town when I visited it. The mud wall, the gates, with the screens before them, still remained, as did also two Buddhist temples with Lamaserais, but these had been evacuated by the bonzis and monks, and were occupied by the military commandant. In the vicinity of the station there is as yet no accommodation for travellers, but in the old town the Chinese Inn, now held by a Russian, is much the best. The Mongol village is two versts further west.

From Khailar to Khingan, about 100 miles, the line passes through deserted country, from which the population was cleared by Generals Orlof and Rennenkampf in 1900, and there was subsequently a fight with Khungus in the "Black Valley," a few miles east of Djaromte. The line winds tremendously in running up the valley of the Djar, between Khan and Yakshi, but everywhere the steppe features predominate the landscape. Russian squatters are settling along the route in great numbers, for although the hills are bare and sandy, the valleys have a deep layer of black earth, none of which appears ever to have been tilled. These villages have a wretched appearance; wattle-and-daub hovels heaped round with turfs, or the just roofed-over trenches like the barracks of the Cossack posts. The Mongols live in felt yurtas, which are not uncommon — it is the Chinese, the former rulers, who have been dislodged.

From Yakshi, a strong Cossack post, with a large Russian settlement, the line enters the hilly district contiguous to the Khingan Range. This country has the unenviable distinction of being the coldest part of the world known within the same latitudes, as much as $-72°$ F. having been registered. It is

very windy, and the summers are wet; the spring season is very short, and autumn is practically non-existent. The line follows approximately the old highway from Khailar to Tsitsikar, as far as Barim, on the eastern slopes. To the north are Khara-Koshu, Mendukhé, and Irekté; to the south Khargo. The mountain range extends from the Amur river on the north, to the Shara-Muren in Mongolia to the south and has never been explored. The highest peak near the railway is only 2500 feet, and the line crosses the range by a zigzag mountain railway ascending to 1930 feet, until the tunnel between Baktu and Irekté is completed.

The western slopes have scant vegetation, and are peopled by Mongol herdsmen, who graze goats on the highlands and feed ponies in the valleys. The flora is alpine; edelweiss is very plentiful, whilst Siberian willow and thorn-scrub appear most in evidence as representing the timber of that region. When the range is crossed a change is noticed at once. The climate is much warmer, trees grow freely, and fir and Siberian larch attain a good size. The temple at Great Khingan has been deserted and is falling into decay. A little lower down the valley is a new Russian church of the type common in Siberia.

From Khingan, the line leaves the highway, and runs east down the valley of the Yal, in places one of the prettiest of the streams approached by the Trans-Asian railways. At Biagchin, bold, bare rocks crown the hills, and the slopes and wide valleys are thickly wooded. Jalantun, in an open valley, is the most important station between the Khingan Mountains and the Nonni river, and is near trade routes to the Khalka district. Near the line are Cossack posts, and the section is patrolled regularly: to the north is a stockade across the Yongal valley, and it is in this neighbourhood that the celebrated Chingis Khan is supposed to have had his home. A station

is named in his honour. Before reaching the Nonni the railway passes a fortress, outside earthworks encircling the modern Russian town of Fu-li-ahdé. Near are Chinese villages within mud walls and surrounded with a belt of trees. The country has more of the Chinese character. Instead of the Russian tipcarts and four-wheeled waggons, the Mongolian cart with its very high wheels, and the little Pekin carts with a sturdy cob between the shafts and a heterogeneous mob of ponies, mules, and asses in the chains, are more general.

The line crosses the Nonni ten miles south of the Chinese town of Tsitsikar, crossing at Sao-bukhu-ma, the old highway from Pekin and Neuchwang to Mergen and the now razed city of Aigun on the south bank of the Amur. The station and the Russian town will be upon the west bank of the river Nonni, here navigated by steamers from the Amur and patrolled by gun-boats.

From the Nonni the railway runs for 150 miles over the steppe land of north Mongolia, to its second crossing of the river, now joined by the Sungari and called by that name. A road, if the track across the prairie merits such a designation, runs parallel to the railway, and much of the land has been under corn crops, though now lying waste. Trees are few, the raised look-out platforms of the Cossack posts are discernible on the horizon north and south. The country is very marshy, especially some thirty miles from the Nonni where the Khu-yar river from the Lesser Khingan Mountains on the north forms a chain of lakes from which there is no outlet; here the level of the railway is being raised several feet. New names as Sartu, Yanda, Tsun, and Mongol have been given to the stations on the higher plateau. Near Zhdga-khé the line descends, and at Zatun it crosses the Sungari by the largest bridge — eight spans — on the railway east of Lake Baikal. This is at present in course of construction and there is a ferry

THE MANCHURIAN FOREST NEAR MODASHI

NIKOLSKOE-USSURI, NEAR VLADIVOSTOK

from the temporary terminus to the Landing Stage at Kharbin (Hotel: Yakor). Opposite the quay is the terminus of the southern branch of the railway to Mukh-den, Port Arthur, and Dalny — or Talien-Wan — about 600 miles, through somewhat flat country. When the bridge is passable the trains will run through to the station of New Kharbin where are the stores and headquarter staff of the Eastern-Chinese railway. This is near the Russian town of Old Kharbin (Hotels: New York and the Gom-Artel), and within a few versts of a Chinese citadel and city — Kharbilin — now demolished.

The country between this bifurcation of the Chinese railway and the sea, that is, so much of it as lies between Vladivostok and Port Arthur north of the Korean frontier, is to all appearances the best served by the Trans-Asian railways. It comprises numerous fertile and well-watered valleys, hills covered with large timber, and mountains — Baitou-Shan 8000 feet — known to be rich in mineral deposits.

The railway east runs up the valley of a small tributary of the Sungari to Aje-khé, a Manchu town with forty thousand inhabitants. The next large town is Imempo, already thronged with Russian settlers. Nearing a spur of the "Long White Mountain" range the railway runs round a hill of white marble, with a station called Carrara, and soon afterwards by a temporary, zigzag mountain railway crosses the range. At Tai-ma-go pass, on the other side of the valley — foreign engineers are constructing a tunnel 1500 yards in length to which, when completed, the line will be diverted. The whole of this region is thick forest with dense jungle; to east and west are plains, where, on the deposits washed down from the mountains, vegetation is luxuriant, and the line is being constructed with difficulty over several marshy tracts, the temporary track making long detours to avoid them. There are several Manchu, and some Korean, villages near the fron-

tier where, 335 miles from Kharbin, another tunnel is being constructed, and a zigzag railway at present leads to the border station Pogranichnaya, in the south Ussuri district of the Maritime Province. Thence, to the junction with the Ussuri section of the Siberian railway at Nikolsk is sixty miles, across flat country settled by Little Russian peasants and Cossack colonists.

From Nikolsk to Vladivostok is only sixty-eight miles, of which the first half is through agricultural country, long settled by peasants from Little Russia, and the final thirty miles along the shore of the Amurski Bay. From Vladivostok the steamers of the Railway Company and private firms, including the Japanese line, run at frequent intervals to Nagasaki in forty-two hours.

The overland through route to the Far East done in the least time and at the lowest cost, can compete for passenger traffic to Japan, and possibly to China as far south as Shanghai. The through fare in Russia, reckoned according to the zone tariff, will be only 100 roubles (£10), first-class, from the German frontier to Vladivostok, but as through bookings are not yet permitted, the calculation must be made by totaling the different sections as follows:

Versts	From	To	1st cl. roubles	2nd cl. roubles	Extras 1st cl.	Hours
2715	London	Moscow	100.00	63.00	5.00	67
5108	Moscow	Irkutsk	72.04	3.20	39.00	181
1165	Irkutsk	* Manchuria	23.00	13.80	3.00	75
1394	Manchuria	Pogranichnaya	26.00	15.00	—	75
91	Pogran.	Nikolskoe	3.28	1.97	—	3.2
102	Nikolsk	Vladivostok	3.68	2.21	—	5
	Vladivostok	Nagasaki	35.00	—	provisions	42
	Vladivostok	Shanghai	55.00	—	—	120

* Excluding Baikal Ferry.

By steamers of the Volunteer Fleet, the saloon fare of 47 roubles includes provisions. The total fare to Nagasaki therefore exclusive of provisions is, first class, 203.56 roubles, or about twenty guineas; to Shanghai £25. The time occupied being not *less* than 17 days.

The fares and times are liable to alteration, and will certainly be revised on the opening of the through route to the travelling public. It was supposed that, owing to the principle of the zone-tariff in force, a through ticket to the Far East would be purchasable for a trifling sum, but the rates on all long-distance journeys have been raised recently; those in force in 1902 being from 20 to 30 per cent. higher than in 1901, whilst increases have also been made in the supplementary charges.

The Eastern Chinese railway through Manchuria is a "foreign line" with a tariff distinct from that of the Russian State lines, and it is now proposed to charge 105 roubles for first, and 66 roubles for second class tickets over the 1400 versts between Manchuria and Pogranichnaya or Inkow (for Newchuang) and Dalny. This last place is definitely decided upon as the terminus, and to it a through ticket will cost over £40.

CHAPTER VII

REAL SIBERIA

THAT region in the valley of the Irtish of which "Sibir" was the capital town in the days of the Kuchum Tartar Khanate, is the one nearest Europe, and the longest occupied by the Russians. The Government of Tobolsk comprises ten provinces having an aggregate area of over 78,000 square miles, and a population of 2,700,000, of which only 8 per cent. are Asiatic natives. It is this Government which registers, and to some slight extent controls, the immigration to Siberia.

According to a recent report of M. Kovalevski, a government expert, the millions of acres of Siberian waste lands can never support an immense population because so much of the area to the north is in the same latitude as the barren lands of Canada, and in the steppe lands on the south there are only oases of insignificant extent suitable for agricultural enterprise, and consequently there is only a meridional belt of all this vast region destined by nature to support civilised life. Nor is this the only limit; even when the land has already been cultivated, in the fertile valleys and bottom lands of the once mighty rivers, between the valleys which are or may be suitable for agriculture, there are swampy, barren, and rocky districts never to be profitably occupied by agriculturists. Useless land of this character he declares the central part of the Tobolsk provinces, the northern part of

Tomsk, almost the whole of the Amur province, and all three of the great steppe regions.

Western Siberia has several important towns: Tomsk, with 40,000 inhabitants, Ekaterinburg, Tiumen, Tobolsk, Barnaul, Biisk, Maryinsk, Kurgan, and Kolyvan, all settlements of an urban character with populations of more than ten thousand Russians, but in Western Siberia the population of towns (8 per cent.) to rural population is less than in European Russia, where it is only 13 per cent.

In the cultivated zone dwell 1,800,000 persons of both sexes, or about 212 souls to the square geographical mile, of whom less than 3 per cent. belong to the native non-Russian population. There are 600,000 settlers in the Altai mining district, or about seventy-eight per square mile. The population scattered in small oases among an unbroken stretch of forests and swamps is thinner, being about fifteen persons to the square mile, with a total of 270,000 souls. The Russians cannot live in this zone, and only appear as proprietors and exploiters of the country.

The immigration returns kept at the registry of Tiumen from 1823–1898 show that in 75 years nearly 700,000 exiles accompanied by 216,000 voluntary companions, were sent into the territory. In the same period 187,000 convicted criminals were also admitted, and with them nearly 107,000 companions. The records of free immigration do not go back so far, but it is estimated that from 1870 to 1890 over half a million entered the country, and that quite 80 per cent. of them settled in the Government of Tobolsk. In 1894, Kurgan was the focal point of the immigration movement, and in that year alone 7000 passed east; in 1895, the railway reached Omsk, and carried 91,000 immigrants east; in 1896, the number of passengers increased to 192,000, but 28,000 peasant pioneers also returned west to their homes in Russia. In 1897, the traffic

was restrained, and 80,000 only were forwarded, but in 1898 and 1899 the total was over 200,000 each year. Subsequently, owing to troubles in the Far East and other causes, this migration has slackened. The districts in the immediate vicinity of the railway and of the rivers are said to be crowded, but to the traveller this is not apparent. Large wooded tracts are left for protective purposes, and the steppe districts do not support a large population.

This is the essentially agricultural district of Siberia; from it eggs and butter are sent to England, and it is from this region that the Russians think some day to supply the London meat market. Peasant settlers have the use of about forty acres each adult male; the Khirgis and Cossacks have large tracts of grazing land assigned them. The tillage is primitive, just shallow turning of the surface soil with oxen and the "sokha," or harrow-plough, but settlers may have agricultural implements of better type from the State depôts, and made in the State factory at Votkin. The yield is at first good, but after four to six crops have been raised in four to twelve years, the land is allowed to remain fallow ten years or more — the Russian method of farming on the fallow-land system. In the Baraba district four different grain crops are sown in five to seven years, and then the land is allowed to rest from ten to twenty-five years, according to its productiveness. Thus having only ten acres, at most, under cultivation each year the peasant cannot grow very wealthy. He does not make the most of his holding as it is, and is slow to adopt new and better methods of agriculture. From the returns it seems that from one and a quarter to one and a half millions of quarters are sown each year, and the average yield is from seven and a half to nine million quarters; the returns for last year have been omitted from the computation as the crops were destroyed by drought.

Some settlements are on the edge of the woodland, and whilst the fortunate live near their land, others have to visit it, leaving the village for that purpose at seed-time and harvest, and possibly going occasionally whilst the crop is maturing. One evil of this village life is the tendency to idleness, the labourer putting off from day to day his journey to his farm-land, so the result is less land tilled than ought to be the case. Farming does not employ all the hands all the year round, and there is plenty of labour available for mining and other work in the slack seasons. Some useful improvements have been made in the Baraba district by utilising this labour on drainage and irrigation works, the reclaimed lands being now eagerly sought by peasants.

Cattle-breeding and sheep-grazing are more profitable undertakings than the newly established dairies. To these there was the usual opposition on the part of the older inhabitants, with some smashing of separators and loud talk of burning down all of the "devil's workshops"; but the agitation quickly subsided when it was seen that the better method resulted in larger profits.

The Khirgis herds are not well tended; in fact, though they are protected to some extent from wolves, they are left to graze on the steppes all the year round, and many are lost from snow, frost, insufficient food, and wild beasts. These herds consist of about two and a half million sheep, one and a half million horses, a million head of cattle, one hundred and eighty thousand camels, one hundred and twenty thousand goats, and ten thousand swine — in all about six and a half million head.

Some of the best horses are raised on the Baraba steppe: the Sargatka is the strongest, the Smiatka the most expensive. A full load, for a level road, is eight hundredweight per horse. In Western Siberia each peasant family may be expected to

possess two or three horses, as many cows, and twice the number of sheep. Taken altogether the majority of the settlers are better off than the peasant farmers of Russia, but agriculture in the Siberian climate and the few industries connected with the conversion of animal products into marketable material are not considered sufficient to ensure the wealth of the country, and the Government is encouraging the establishment of manufactures to supply the eastern markets, and compete there with goods imported from abroad.

Fairs flourish exceedingly in the Tobolsk region; over 400 are held annually in the steppe districts alone, so there is no steady trade in the towns, all the important transactions being made at one or other of the periodical markets, where commodities are bartered. Much rubbish has been sent to these fairs from Russian factories, and Irbit especially has gained an ill reputation for the quality of manufactured articles vended there. Generally, the importance of the fairs is on the decline, the regular markets taking their place for cattle sales, and the commercial travellers, storekeepers, and pedlars arrange for a constant small supply instead of only a single consignment yearly.

Central Siberia, of which Tomsk is the chief town, has other characteristics than agriculture. In the South rise the Altai, Tsin-Shan, or "gold" mountains; consisting of thirteen distinct chains of hills running north and south, having in the Katun range, the Belukha peak, 11,000 feet, the highest elevation, and merging with the Motley Mountains, the Alatau, to the snow peaks of Taskyl, and the Sayan with true Alpine features; in the Katun is a glacier of that name seven miles long, and between the Taskyl and Abakan, a peak 15,000 feet high. These mountains form the watershed of the Ob and Yenisei, and their spurs the watersheds of their tributaries.

The aggregate area is about 540,000 square miles, of which

SIBERIAN VILLAGE, EAST OF BAIKAL

nearly half is Crown land; the southern portion forming the Altai Mining District of his Imperial Majesty's Cabinet. The region is therefore more or less dominated by the Mining element, but there is very rich agricultural land, also pertaining to the Crown, in the Barnaul, Biisk, and Zmeinogorsk provinces. The native population is insignificant, only 4.5 per cent., and the agriculturists are on the average better off than in Western Siberia. From one and a half million to two million poods of mixed seeds, wheat, rye, barley, buckwheat, oats, &c., are sown yearly and yield over nine million poods, with little variation. There are two millions each of horses and cattle, and one and a half million sheep in the government. In the Biisk district deer (*Cervus elaphus*, or "maral") are farmed for their horns alone. Bee-keeping is an extensively practised industry, resulting in an annual supply of three million pounds of honey. The district has also a surplus of grain estimated at over twenty million poods a year. Another product peculiar to Siberia is the cedar nut, the seeds of the *Pinus cembra*, gathered in all the northern forests and sold at from three to five shillings the 36 lbs. In the Tomsk market as many as 7000 tons are sold in a year, and they are eaten all over Siberia and in Manchuria and Mongolia. Nut traders also collect larch-tree sulphur, a gum chewed by natives and settlers.

The manufactories are comparatively unimportant, numbering indeed some 2000, but employing only 12,000 hands, when 4000 windmills have been added. Tanning, brewing, and distilling are the trades of the region.

What the Russians term Eastern Siberia lies between Tomsk and Lake Baikal, comprising the Governments of Yeniseisk-Irkutsk — essentially a hilly region — and the territory of Yakutsk, in the barren, frozen north.

The northern Yeniseisk is barren land, much of it swampy,

some stony, nearly all unfit for cultivation. The southern has fine steppe or prairie land, many ravines, and fine fertile slopes, but its population is scant, and mining is the chief pursuit of the settler.

On the south boundary of the Irkutsk district are the Sayan Mountains, the old frontier between Russia and China. The Sayan range consists of ridges with steep declivities, and merges with the Altai. On the south, or Chinese side, is an immense plain, the original home of the Turkish tribes who overran Europe. The highest peak of the Silver Mountains, at the southern extremity of the district, rises to a height of 11,430 feet.

The population, excluding Yakutsk and its natives, is about 1,100,000, the natives forming 10 per cent. of the total, and males are in excess by 20 per cent. In addition to mining and lumbering, there is some manufacturing — glass and porcelain works having been established.

Agriculture is at a low ebb. Land tenure is irregular; it has been the custom of the settler to till what he wished of the commune's holding, and consider that cultivated portion his particular property, a contention the State does not uphold. In clearing the *taiga*, the usual, wasteful way is to fire the forest, or first cut down the trees, pile them and burn them, tilling the land in between the stumps. Spring wheat is sown on winter rye stubble without reploughing. As the winters are snowless, sheltering crops have been tried, but experimental husbandry is at present the rule. The result is a shortage of food stuffs, and grain is imported from West Siberia. The cattle average two head to each inhabitant, and also are insufficient for local requirements, and in this market Western Siberia has to compete with large drafts from Mongolia.

There are nineteen distilleries, five breweries, a sugar re-

finery, two foundries, a cloth mill, and some miscellaneous factories in the district, the object being the supply of necessaries to the large mining population.

The physical characteristics of the western littoral of Lake Baikal are intensified to the east. The country is hilly, and continues so with few interruptions, all the way along the meridional belt to the shores of the Pacific. On the south the hill ranges rise to 6000 feet, and the steppe land is on the southern slopes only. There is much barren land to the north, where there is very little soil on the slaty rock, but many fertile valleys and bottom lands near the Vitim, Amur, and Shilka. The hill ranges recur until culminating with the volcanic Kamchatkan range, with Ichinsk 17,000 feet high; and Kluchevskaya, still active, more than 16,000 feet above the sea-level.

The middle belt is the agricultural district, which, as stated elsewhere, has been colonised by special methods, is subject to the influence of trade and immigration from the east, so possesses special characteristics distinct from those of Siberia. Until quite recently Russia east of Baikal comprised only the lands corresponding to the central and northern zones of Western Siberia, but by extending her southern boundary into Manchuria and Mongolia, the steppe region right to the fringe of the sandy desert is reached in the east as in the west.

Lake Baikal seems to be the actual limit of the true Siberia, though many features of the west are reproduced in the Russian territory between it and the Pacific. It is one of the largest mountain lakes in the world, having an area of about eight and a half million acres, and a length of about 400 miles. Its water is fresh, its surface more than 1500 feet above sea-level, and its greatest depth over 5000 feet at the south end. It is divided by a submerged ridge, running east and west, about 150 miles from the south shore, and the upper part is comparatively shallow. Possibly the irregular formation, together with its

elevation, account for its restlessness. Baikal is always in motion, often stormy, and freezes over in one night, generally in January. It remains frozen about three months, and though crossed regularly at this time, is subject to immense flaws, ice breakage, and the formation of *toros*, or ice packs. The Angara, its only outlet, a rapid, turbulent stream with many islets and shoals, is also slow to freeze, and, like most Siberian rivers, freezes from the bottom and shores, the central stream being the last to congeal at the surface.

Baikal, the Rich Lake of the Daurs and the Holy Lake of the Mongols, is inhabited by a special variety of seal, somewhat analogous to *Phoca annelata*, which is hunted all through the summer, and ought to be protected by a close time. The special varieties of fish include the omul, one of the salmonidæ, and the dracunculus — a long-headed, large-eyed creature about twelve inches long, having on each side continuous fins extending from the gills to the tail — which is fished up from 1800 feet and greater depths. It is rich in crustaceans, gasteropods, and produces four varieties of sponge.

The geological formation of Siberia is peculiar. If there has been no glacial epoch, there was an earlier ice period in Northern Siberia. The surface soil rests upon sand, sandstone, or gravel to a depth of from twelve to fifty or more feet, then there is a stratum of black soil; and below this again sand, gravel, and sandstone, proof of an earlier productive period with subsequent submersion. This layer of black soil in some parts is akin to coal — lignite — which contains driftwood, and below it, in some parts, is pure ice, called rock-ice, or crystal, to distinguish it from the surface ice of the present period. In this rock-ice are found the well-preserved remains of the mammoth and the driftwood of its age. Below the rock-ice the geological formation is fairly regular, but there are in places, especially in Eastern Siberia, many faults and the formation

RUSSIAN COLONY IN WEST SIBERIA

LISTVENICHNAYA, LAKE BAIKAL, IN MID-WINTER

common to volcanic regions. The best authorities agree that Baikal is of volcanic origin, but from Baikal eastward the same peculiar formation recurs, and in some places the gravel is found to be frozen hard 150 feet below the present surface. The greatest depth to which the earth is frozen during the present period is about thirty feet, and this only where there is little or no snow as a protecting cover. In these northern latitudes the summer sun melts to a depth of twelve feet or less from the surface only; therefore irrespective of the evidence of the upper burden of coal, débris, gravel, black soil, and surface vegetation, this rock-ice must have been formed at an earlier geologic period.

One of the many fancies based upon the formation is the supposition that the Great Siberian plain was submerged within historic times, and so connected with the story of Noah's flood; his world, bounded by Ararat, the Altai, Baikal, and on the west by the Urals and Caucasus, having been submerged for a time. The central territory is still rising, but on the Arctic shore is sinking. Humboldt, it will be remembered, saw a plateau rise when he was in South America, and stated that there must have been a corresponding depression elsewhere. This was subsequently found to be the case; subsidences having occurred in Northern Asia.

The meridional, cultivable belt which comprises the new Siberia of Russian immigration, is likely in the future to suffer more and more from droughts unless artificial irrigation is practised. The deserts are growing northward, the air is drier, the temperature higher, and steppes are replacing forest. Also the rivers are silting up; many are streams at flood time only, not always then, and at others chains of stagnant lakes, some becoming bitter and brackish and all unwholesome. Swamps must be drained, water stored and distributed where and when required. In fact agricultural Siberia more than any needs

labour; labour well directed and long continued to convert these rude farms into real gardens, and so obtain from the soil its utmost productiveness. The forest reservations are of themselves insufficient.

The rivers and lakes fed by forest water teem with fish, for there is food in abundance. Fish is the staple diet of Siberians, and the inland fisheries of Siberia ought to be preserved and fish culture encouraged by the State, if not undertaken by it.

The settlers are little better than the natives in depending upon the natural resources of the country; they take game instead of rearing cattle, collect or buy wild fruits instead of planting orchards; mow the wild grass of the natural forest clearings, and river bottoms instead of forming meadows; their only cure for unproductive soil is to allow it to remain fallow; so the real Siberia is not, and for a long time will not be, that extremely productive country recent travellers describe.

Siberia is rich enough in minerals. In addition to gold in the Altai there is silver which has been worked for a century and a half; it supplies more than two-thirds of the total output in Russia, which total is less than one five-hundredth part of the world's annual production. Nearly all the mines are on Crown property, and in the Caucasus also the only silver smelting works belong to the State. The silver is derived from argentiferous lead ores; a little being recovered also in refining gold. Platinum is taken from the State mines and is also worked by two companies; the annual aggregate output is less than 200,000 ounces. Graphite was quarried for many years; but the old workings near Irkutsk are now closed. Gems are now found in the Urals, and also in the Altai mining district reserved to the State. Coal and iron are not found together, but sufficiently near to make the production of merchant-iron a successful undertaking. The present output is infinitesimal. Except for the railway there is no market for

coal, wood being the household fuel, and factories practically non-existent. In the Far East Siberian coal may yet compete with that of Japan as bunker fuel.

The Siberia of Convention — the land of dreary forests and desolate frozen wastes — lies far to the north of the great railway, and is sparsely populated by pioneer settlers, exiles, and the remnants of indigenous tribes who all acknowledge the Tsar as their sovereign. But even this part of Siberia is far from being what people picture it. All Siberia is full of surprises, and most surprising is the civilisation extending to the very remote regions. In Kamchatka, for instance, it is not rare to meet a man wearing a clean linen collar and a silk necktie; all the natives do not wear skins, except in winter, for even the very primitive hairy Ainus of Sakhalin, who fight the bear with their knives, have village industries among them, and of these weaving is the chief.

Again, the camel is usually associated with dry, sandy deserts, and tropical heat. In Siberia the camel is seen in winter hauling sledges over the river ice and frozen roads. Reindeer and dogs are used also, but they are conventional and expected. Hundreds of things one sees in the far north and east are neither one nor the other.

The natives are dying out very fast in some districts, increasing in others. In the west the Tartars still number 90,000; the majority are Mohammedans and many lead a purely nomad life and speak Tursk, a dialect resembling that of the Tartars of Kazan. The Finnish tribes number 40,000, and the Mongolian Kalmuks and the Samoyedes together, perhaps as many.

The Kirghis graziers live upon their herds; they have their own system of local government and maintain their own customs and tongue, and live apart from Russians. They act up to the spirit of their proverb — "it is better to fast six

days than omit to do what our forefathers practised," which will please all interested in folk lore. Other native races are losing their tribal characteristics, and the ethnologists are busy with phonographs, cameras, and pencils recording the existing evidence of people soon to be unrecognisable in the cosmopolitan Siberia of the near future.

Hunting, fishing, and trapping are the chief pursuits of the Siberian natives. It is from Siberia chiefly that the large supplies of game are despatched to Russia and thence to Western Europe. Until recently the Narym province of West Siberia was the principal hunting ground. Some 2500 people are almost entirely engaged in hunting and trapping, and their take is enormous. One year's figures — admittedly incomplete — include 700,000 squirrels, 15,000 mink, 3000 sable, 1500 foxes, 2000 ermine, 1500 otters, 200 bears, 18,000 hares, 3000 skunks, 1000 roebuck, 700 deer, and smaller quantities of glutton, badger, lynx, mountain sheep, ibex, and rarer beasts. The birds include 70,000 willow-grouse, 30,000 blackcock, 8000 capercailzie, 5000 partridges, and many thousand jays and magpies for plumage.

The wildfowler practises in the old way. A net is erected between two pools; at night the birds are driven from one pool and making for the other get entangled in the net placed in a well-chosen clearing. They are killed with the teeth, the trapper biting each at the back of the neck. It is not known how many are captured, but the quantity is immense; duck — fresh, dried, smoked, salted, and preserved in various ways — is a staple article of diet in many parts and procurable almost everywhere throughout Siberia.

In Eastern Siberia and Manchuria, deer, antelope, and roebuck are taken in enormous quantities for food, immense drives being organised by the settlers each autumn; also in some parts in the spring as well.

THE BUFFET IN THE MIDDLE OF LAKE BAIKAL

NATIVES OF THE LOWER AMUR REGION

The Khirgis run down the wolf in the open, with relays of horses or horsemen usually, and kill the exhausted crouching animal by a blow on the nose with the butt of a whip.

Siberia is full of interest for the naturalist. Professor Kashenko, of Tomsk University, declares that the fauna of Siberia are akin to those of Europe in long-past ages. That the country shelters many varieties which have become extinct, and that there is great danger of these being lost with the settlement of the country. The forest reserves will to a large extent prevent the extinction of bears and small mammals, if a close time for trapping be enforced; the needed draining of the marsh lands would lead to the extinction of some varieties of birds, but as there would also disappear many of the insect pests which render life in Siberia so burdensome, this would have a corresponding advantage.

The Altai region is probably the best game ground in the old world, and now that it is not only known to sportsmen but is resorted to yearly by increasing numbers, some such reservation as the Yellowstone Park might be set aside for a game preserve. There are no game laws in the Tomsk Government and practically no restriction is placed upon the killing of animals, rare, useful, curious, or ornamental. The hunting societies do not exist so much for the protection of game as the encouragement of legitimate sport, the Siberian thinking that for killing a doe in calf he should be more honoured. The societies are doing good work, for hunting in Siberia has been practised in most barbaric fashion. Those people who think that birds' plumage should not be used for personal adornment might find in Siberia much to which they could more legitimately object in the methods followed for obtaining furs.

Probably fish is the staple article of diet through North Siberia. The keta is the chief variety, migrating up the Amur and tributaries in the summer, developing teeth, and becoming

almost another fish in the higher reaches. From the keta, the salmon, and the sturgeon the Golds make their fish-skin suits, many domestic appliances, and even the sails of their boats. The quantity taken is immense, and the flesh is used in the littoral territory to feed dogs, swine, and even cattle. The fish are taken on lines, in nets and traps, especially in weirs of wattles thrown out like wing-dams from the shore.

When Yermak, and those who succeeded him in the conquest of Siberia, passed east, the native tribes made but slight resistance to the men with fire-arms. They simply fled before the invader, and as the land was occupied along the high road to the east they went further north or south. East of Krasnoyarsk the aborigines bear strong facial resemblance to the American Indian, but none possess the Red Man's courage and fighting quality. They will give each other very bad characters, but keep very closely to their own domain, know next to nothing of the neighbouring tribes, and are peaceable and timid. This is particularly the case with the Syotts, who were divided into two parties, now distinct tribes. They inhabit the watershed below Zyariski towards the Tanoolski range in Mongolia. The northern Syotts live by hunting and trapping, profess Christianity, and practise Shamanism. The southern are more primitive; some have become Buddhists; others have no definite religion, but are given to self-immolation. At certain times a sort of frenzy seizes the people of a district. They build an immense harbour of boughs, cover it with wattles, then with turf. They drive their cattle inside, and later all the people go in. The door is closed and the chief sets fire to the fodder. All are smothered and as the walls take fire, the supports char through, then the turfs fall down through the embers and bury the whole community.

South of the Syotts are the Turbits, a tribe more Mongolian than they. The Syotts give the Turbits a very bad name,

whilst the Turbits declare that the Syotts are cutthroats and thieves to a man. These people are just graziers and hunters, and have no idea of work. The Buriats, who are more widely spread, are also of Mongolian stock. They attempt agriculture, but are better as teamsters. Buriat women work and dress just as do the men, because in days past the Chinese Mongols used to make war on the settlements in order to carry off women. Further east are Giliaks, Orocheans, and Mangirs, all wandering tribes, and many professing, whilst all practise, Shamanism. The Golds dress in fish skins and have mud huts; their chief occupation is fishing, and in summer gathering wild fruits for sale in the Russian settlements. To the north are Tunguses, Ostiaks, Kamchadales, and Samoyedes, hunters, fishers, and trappers, preyed upon by the free traders and declining in number.

Trapping is not a lucrative business, but trading by barter is distinctly profitable. In Siberia, as elsewhere, the native is ready to throw away his months of labour for a little bad spirit. The Government is powerless to prevent the trade, illicit stills being plentiful throughout the lone land. Then false weights and measures are used, and the natives are advanced stores, in order to be kept in debt to particular traders, who thus get a monopoly of the season's catch, and keep down prices. The natives, on their side, have learned how to patch and fake the spoiled skins. Rare furs are dealt in at very high prices by the traders amongst themselves, and to the public are sold not cheaper than in London or Paris.

When M. Stadling went across the Taimyr peninsula in 1898, the representations he made on his return resulted in the punishment of a fur-trader, one Sotnikov, who seems to have been the worst offender. He was succeeded by a certain Vladimirski, who is declared to be little, if anything, better. In Kamchatka, matters are not so bad as further west, for the

country is reached easily by steamers and visited frequently by Government officials, protecting the sealing-grounds. Some English traders have of late years been purchasing the Kamchatkan catch, and are roundly abused by Russian traders for having given fair prices for arctic pelts. Probably the natives and the State would raise no objection to the same traders extending their operations all over the Land of the Great White Sun.

The real Siberia is other than that meridional zone traversed by the railway, which is the pick of the country, the better Siberia. That appears clean and fairly prosperous with its neat, new, well-painted stations; picturesque churches — built out of the Alexander III. Memorial fund — schools, hospitals, meeting-houses, immigration homes, pleasant little homesteads for officials, compact, well-built, and squarely planned settlements; windmills, water-towers, and railway workshops. This new Siberia may extend, all hope that it will, but Siberians fear that a couple of hundred miles north and south of the line, things will go on much the same as they do now, as they did before even the line was planned, as they must do in those regions which, in official language, "cannot support civilised life."

CHAPTER VIII

SIBERIAN LIFE

TOWN and country life in Siberia is very much the same as in provincial Russia. The climate is more rigorous, the summers are hotter, the winter colder, spring and autumn are almost eliminated, and the changes from season to season are sudden. Towns in the latitude of Lisbon have a climate nearer akin to that of Stockholm. Then during the long summer days, the vegetable growth is luxuriant — things grow and ripen quickly, or not at all, hence the woods are soft, the fruits and vegetables insipid when compared with similar varieties which in a more equable climate mature more slowly.

Serfdom it is said never existed in Siberia, and when the serfs were liberated in the Russian Empire it affected only 3000 people in Tobolsk, and these serfs were already practically free, for they had paid no tax in money or labour. Slavery existed, for it was not until 1825 that the Khirgis Cossacks were forbidden to traffic in prisoners of war, as had been their custom, permission having been given in 1756 to all orthodox Russians in Siberia to hold, sell, and barter Kalmuk and other Asiatics.

At the present time Siberian life differs from that of Russia in being more free. The people are more daring and reckless; there is much more crime, and there are many more men than women.

The independence of the people is in part innate — they themselves have defied authority — or are descended from those

who have done so — and, in part, from the laxer control of the governors and greater difficulty in administering the law.

From the true Siberians must be excluded the recent free colonists. These live much as they did in Russian villages, and as far as possible the Russian authorities arrange to locate them where they will not be subject to the contaminating influence of the exiles and convicts.

As may be expected the town residents consist of different sets or cliques. The Governor and official class, with whom are the army officers, do not usually associate on equal terms with any of the Siberian residents. In a few cases they may admit to their social intimacy distinguished political exiles. The exiles are many of them remittance men, living upon an income forwarded to them from Russian estates, or by friends and relatives. They follow their professions, engage in trade, or attempt to exploit the country. According to their bent they join the literary, artistic, scientific, archæological, agricultural, philanthropic, or hunting societies now found in almost every Siberian town. Many simply drift, amusing themselves as best they can with cards, stories, and "life" in public restaurants. Those who are honest and capable quickly obtain employment, often highly remunerative, if they possess special technical knowledge. The town museums are rich in local specimens, and excellent work in collecting, classifying, and naming the objects has been done by the unpaid, unemployed exiled settler. The different sections associated to the Museum have frequent meetings, and the intellectual life is far greater than any non-resident would imagine to be possible. There is usually a good library, there are books, newspapers, periodicals, and transactions innumerable, far beyond the actual requirements of the majority of the residents; also free and subscription libraries, booksellers' shops, even already at Khailar, and from village to village, and settlement to settle-

IRKUTSK, FROM THE RAILWAY

ment, tramp the book-pedlars, who may also be met on the trains offering volumes from their parcels of current literature. The Russian system of subscribing periodicals at any post-office is also a boon to Siberians, who read a great deal, and write not a little, as the Russian magazines bear witness. Probably the person most severely hurt by exile is the political reformer, who finds himself cut off from the movement in Europe and from the propaganda of the different revolutionary societies.

Next to suffer, from the point of view of real hardship, are the higher officials and their families. There are few people of their own social standing with whom to associate, and a newcomer who can be received is generally warmly welcomed. In their own narrow circle they have what may be termed the domestic amusements — interminable games at cards, concerts innumerable, and a quiet dance whenever there is an opportunity. In winter the theatre, musical recitals, promenade concerts on behalf of some charity, and visiting each other constitute their pastimes. For those used to St. Petersburg and Moscow, social life in Siberia is very slow and dull.

In summer there is *dacha* life, the well-to-do go into the villages as Russians always will. In town there is a public garden, perhaps an outdoor theatre at which the "Geisha" is played. Usually there is an *al fresco* restaurant; Little Russian chorus singers, an orchestra of ladies — Russian, German, or Polish — a Neapolitan choir, and vocal and instrumental music of some kind there is sure to be. Bicycle races, trotting matches, the promenade, and its *allegri* at intervals. These amusements are wearisome. The "Siberian Guide" says of Krasnoyarsk: "The managers of the assembly are very indelicate and take advantage of the conditions. On holidays the entrance fee is very high. The visitors are offered a very poor distraction, namely — fireworks and the letting off of a balloon. As these amusements are always the same the public is per-

fectly sick of them. This discontent has of late been expressed in the local newspaper, but without avail. Twenty thousand inhabitants are powerless against a few dozen members and their families who alone use the garden." Elsewhere, a garden, with band, is open to the "intelligent public." The classes hold aloof from the masses. For the cause of charity many may meet at a concert, promenade, or share in a lottery. To the fund all may subscribe. Unlucky is the public entertainer who omits to approach the correct public in the first instance. A circus wandered through from the Baltic to the Pacific in three years: in some towns before a performance could be given, special permission had to be obtained by telegraph from St. Petersburg.

The sending of a message from east to west is not a matter of hours, or even days, but of weeks. Unless it is made "urgent" and paid for at treble-rate, six weeks is not too long for a reply-paid message to pass to and from Eastern Siberia to Western Russia. On the coast the merchants, pressed for time, send their messages round by the ocean cables notwithstanding the extra expense and many land-wires. The telegraph is much used, the post less, for business purposes. With reference to Irkutsk, the guide book states: "The post-office is so crowded that one has to wait a very long time; in such cases it is better to go there from 1 A.M. to 2 A.M. or in the morning before 9 o'clock. At the telegraph office the worst time is from 5 A.M. to 6 A.M. when the telegrams to the State and public banks are being delivered." Telephones are much used in towns; Irkutsk has 500 town subscribers, and long distance lines to the gold-fields, Lake Baikal, and elsewhere. Even expensive, far-away Blagoveshchensk charges its telephone subscribers only £7 annually, and gives an excellent service.

The poorer classes depend for their music on the balalaika,

the accordeon, melodeon, the small harp, and the violin. Nearly all the villagers can play the accordeon, and everywhere Russians congregate, the wandering minstrels, generally violinist and harpist, find their way, and already they have penetrated the innermost recesses of Manchuria and Mongolia garrisoned by Russian troops.

Men who do not hold official posts can live in public, in the forced gaiety of the restaurants and clubs; can speculate, gamble, intrigue, criticise, make and spend money easily and freely. There is chiefly paper currency, and a common amusement is to hold out a note — 1, 3, 5, or more roubles — and call for the number — odd, or even — the note changing hands if the guess be correct.

The editor of a metropolitan paper is exiled, say to Irkutsk — he has all the gossip of the capital at the tip of his tongue; the local periodicals make room for him, and he studies how he can publish what he knows, so that all clever enough to read will understand, but no one can find fault with the phrases he actually uses, or the commonplaces they set forth, however unmistakable the real meaning may be.

The great event in the history of modern Siberia was the journey of the Emperor, when Tsarevich, in 1891, as a fitting conclusion to his travels. In all towns triumphal arches were erected to commemorate his visit, and many of these remain. That in the eastern capital, Khabarovsk, was of the most flimsy construction and its wreckage only is visible.

In all the large towns there is more or less of the gold fever; money is easily acquired and foolishly expended. As long as there is noise and glitter, sparkling wine and bejewelled women, the Siberian believes he has all he can obtain of the pleasures of life.

Who are the people? All sorts, all conditions. One man, a distinguished foreigner, has an autograph letter of the Tsar

addressed to himself, a testimony to his bravery. Some vodka-inspired Cossack officer proclaimed the Tsar greatest of all, and tried to force the company present to concur. The foreigner would not. He said that in the Bible he read of God and of the Devil, but there was no mention of any Tsar. The Cossack threatened to fire; the other dared him to do so; and a person of superior position promptly arrested the foreigner for *lèse majesté*. News of the affair reached the Tsar who quashed the whole business by a "letter to a brave man." He is one of the few foreigners who know other countries, yet live in Siberia by preference. Another well-known Siberian is a member of a noble family, more ancient than the Romanofs. When Prince Dolgorooki was Governor-General of Moscow, now more than twenty years ago, this Siberian is said to have helped in selling the State residence to a rich Englishman seeking a home in the old capital. The Englishman was shown over the public apartments, expressed himself as satisfied, and paid the earnest money, or deposit. As the tenant could not conveniently leave at once, it was arranged that the Governor-General would stay on for a month or so, keeping to a suite in the building. On the other hand the Governor-General was told that this English lord could not find accommodation suited to his rank and purse anywhere in Moscow, so it would be a gracious act if he could be accommodated for a time in the State apartments of the Governor-General, no doubt there would be a handsome douceur forthcoming in consideration of the courtesy shown. Then, when the Englishman was housed under the same roof as the Governor-General, and each occupier, though extremely polite to the other, was wondering how soon he would be rid of him, it was only the Siberian who was missing when the climax was reached. But not for this was he sent to Siberia. Some others, now his fellow-residents in Tomsk, had planned to rob from a royal

mausoleum the gem-bedizened *Sakkos*, or palls, with which the tombs are covered on State occasions. The opportunity was another interment, and with great pomp the would-be thief was conveyed in a coffin, and probably would have effected his purpose if the real funeral, with the royal corpse, had not arrived too soon afterwards.

There is nothing mean about some of the stories current in Siberia. Tomsk has a legend that an old man who lived under the name of Theodore Kuzmich was none other than the Tsar Alexander I., who, instead of dying in Taganrog, availed himself of an opportunity whilst travelling in the Crimea to effect an exchange like the hero of a Kipling story, and, renouncing his great estate, devoted the remainder of his life to meditation and charity. He came a begging vagrant from Russia, and was given a home by a Tomsk merchant, who appears either to have recognised him or received from his own lips the secret of his life. The hut in which he lived for ten years or more is now protected by a special roof, and venerated by the public as the home of Alexander the Hermit.

About twenty years ago the door of Leinner's, the best-known beer house in St. Petersburg, was opened and shut for customers by a small, red-haired, lynx-eyed man named Morozov. The odd *grivni* given by the frequenters of the house soon amounted to many thousands of roubles, and Morozov opened a large restaurant of his own in the capital. He also lent money at interest, which is not only detrimental to the business of the banks and State pawn shops, but against the law. So Morozov's restaurant was summarily closed, and later Morozov, at the leisure of the law, was exiled to Siberia. He recommenced in Tomsk, succeeded from the beginning, and now possesses the largest and most magnificent of the Tomsk hotel resorts. Nearly all the Siberian townsmen have some such story. Here the richest builder is a convicted murderer;

this successful merchant an incendiary; that one a forger; the daughter of the mayor is to marry the son of a bank defaulter; and as one, so most.

A commissary of police in a small provincial town gets sixty shillings a month and must provide his own horses and uniform. He obtains money by some informal, but usual, method, and is exiled for doing so. His wife and family follow; his term of imprisonment over he obtains employment, and as trusted servant of a landed proprietor is paid a salary of £600 a year with house and horses free, and many perquisites. He has European teachers for his children, his wife dresses in the latest fashion and smartest style, both have as much social amusement as they desire, still, if only he could go back to Russia he would be glad to forgo all, and accept again the commissary's post and salary — or even less. Very many view banishment in the same way; others are content with Siberian life.

Siberian towns, even capitals like Tomsk, Irkutsk, and Khabarovsk, are squalid, mean, and unkempt. It is not thought worth while to make a costly road for the few months of summer. The sidewalks are boards put on trestles over open sewers, and here and there planks are broken or missing; steps are numerous, and the roadway is always impassable. Public carriages are comparatively few, and then the coachmen instead of running after the fares have to be sought for. The streets are badly illuminated, and after dark are roamed by the great yard-dogs — mastiffs and other fierce brutes — which are trained to take little or no notice of the few pedestrians who tramp noisily along the sidewalks, but approach and commence the attack, if one hesitates but so long as necessary to determine whether to turn to right or left. The dogs of Constantinople are lap-dogs in comparison to these savage wolf-like mongrels turned loose

THE AMURSKAYA, IRKUTSK

TRIUMPHAL ARCH, VLADIVOSTOK

in all Siberian towns and villages after dark. Some houses, not all, keep a yard man or dvornik, but after dark he does not venture into the deserted streets, which are left to carriage people and desperate folk.

The Siberian belle, usually referred to as the "Lioness," if not quite the leader of fashion, is as much alive to the claims of trim attire as are her sisters in the west. She is certain of a large circle of gallant admirers, and, rarely seen before noon, amuses herself and plays cards into the small hours, leading much the same sort of life as used to be passed by Russian matrons a century ago.

Crime is prevalent in all Siberian towns; murders, assaults, outrages, and burglary are the commoner forms. Statistics are not helpful as an indication, so few arrests are made, so few crimes discovered. Garrotting is the usual device of the foot-pad. With a short stick and a noose of twine he approaches his victim stealthily from the rear, slips the cord over his head, and strangles the man, woman, or child, who is unable to utter a cry; then he strips from the body everything likely to lead to its identification, and decamps. If there is an accomplice, he blocks the stranger's advance, or engages his attention at the correct moment. Nor is there perfect safety in numbers. Whilst in Khabarovsk, I paid a visit to one of the lone pioneers of Anglo-Saxondom in that far land. At nine in the evening we left the club to talk at home of home, and there, in the main street within a stone's throw of the Governor-General's house, three citizens were attacked within five minutes of our passing. Their assailants got away, but all three of the merchants succumbed to their injuries. In Blagoveshchensk, in broad daylight, between two and three in the afternoon, and quite close to the main hotel and high street, I heard a series of revolver shots, and turning, saw a man leisurely reloading his revolver. His victim, a woman in this instance, never uttered a cry,

merely fell. The street was almost deserted, and the people who heard and saw took very little notice, but with the aid of a passing soldier we arrested that man, and in the rough-and-ready lock-up to which he was taken were electric light and telephone. In a few minutes the district superintendent was summoned, but we were scarcely thanked for our part, and our acquaintance told us afterwards our action was not Siberian — the affair was none of ours.

From Cheliabinsk to Vladivostok crime is equally common. In the latter place I was told that after each pay day at the naval fitting yard men were missing and never returned — on one occasion thirty disappeared; ordinarily nine or ten bodies are found within a few days, stripped of every shred of clothing, tattooed marks gashed over, and the features hacked so that they could not be recognised. Russians suffer more than the Chinese, and Russians usually are the aggressors. Policemen are too few and too wary. Unless the street be crowded, men may shout loud and long before any will venture to their assistance.

The suburbs and villages suffer from the *brodyagi*, or vagrant bands, who raid settlements and houses, exacting all they dare, and often not stopping short of other crimes. They are the fugitives from justice, escaped criminals, the reckless and daring convicts who have eluded their prison guards. They have nothing but what they have stolen, a wood staff, and a short length of gut or twine. Whoever gets into their power has a short shrift, and theirs is not longer if they are captured in the act or traced. For entering and robbing a church in Vladivostok some were hanged, for in Siberia the death penalty is not in abeyance as in Russia. In Siberia — and Russia too — lynch law is common among the peaceable, industrious, well-to-do peasants, as it is also among the half-Russianised natives. One method of dealing with cattle thieves is to bend down two

straight young birch-trees, tie the hands of the robber to one, the feet to the other, then release the trees, and hurry away.

The *brodyagi* are the outcome of the convict and exile system — they are recruited from the men none will employ. They have neither home nor food, except such as they beg or steal. When they are Chinese, and in Manchuria, the Russians hunt them down, shoot as many as they can at sight, and have those wounded and taken alive, decapitated, and their heads hung by the wayside; but no real attempt has been made to rid Siberia of this, its greatest pest and danger.

CHAPTER IX

THE SIBERIANS

IT is nearly three centuries since Siberia commenced to be repeopled from the east. In that period America has changed hands several times and has evolved nations, whereas Russia in Asia has simply grown and justified the boast of the Emperor Nicholas I. that "where the Russian flag has once flown it must never be hauled down."

The first attempt the State made to colonise Siberia was in 1590, when thirty families from Solvychegodsk were sent to Siberia as settlers by order of the Tsar, Ivan the Terrible. Then, in 1593, the inhabitants of the town of Uglich were exiled to Pelym for having witnessed the murder of his son Dmitri, and the bell of the town for having sounded the alarm on that occasion was deprived of its ears, flogged, and sent after them to Tobolsk.

The free Cossacks of the Don, following upon the retreating Tartar horde when the empire of Chingis Khan crumbled away, possessed themselves of certain lands east of the Urals, and these were amongst the founders of the Russian settlements in Asia. Later thousands of Poles were settled in the Tobolsk province, Jews were located in Tiukalinsk, and Western Siberia has had contingents from Finland, most of the governments of European Russia, and also a large number of gypsies, who have retained the nomadic habit, and wander over all Siberia and Manchuria.

FREE PEASANTS AT THE AGRICULTURAL DEPÔTS OF THE WEST SIBERIAN RAILWAY

Russian policy with regard to Siberia was unchanging; the East was a convenient place to which to send the undesirable subjects of the Tsar. Ivan the Terrible sent not only the first exiles there, but even banished to Siberia an Englishman, one William Barnsley of Worcester, who long years afterwards returned a wealthy merchant. It is only since the commencement of the century that Siberia has been raised to the status of a colony to be settled by free men alone. Like French and German foreign possessions it has no system of self-government. Its laws are the Russian laws, administered in the different territories by the corresponding chancelleries in St. Petersburg. There is no Minister for Siberia, or special, exclusive department, unless the immigration staff be so considered. The Russian Empire is to be homogeneous; Siberia is to become Russia beyond the Urals, or beyond Baikal, nothing more. It is because of this principle that the privileges of Finland have been curtailed, the legal practice of Poland assimilated to that of Russia, and outlying provinces, whether designated as free states or protected areas, whenever within the Russian sphere of influence will be compelled to observe Russian laws.

The Slavs banished to Siberia, or transported there as convicted criminals, have all been people who dared to do and to be; the reformers, the faddists, the malcontents, the unconventional souls whose spirits were at war with the prevailing state of things; individuals of strong character — whether good or bad — recalcitrant beings whom the rulers wished to tame, or thinkers and actors in advance of their time whose propinquity was felt to be dangerous to the State. Just such men and women as have made history in Western Europe. They were followed by those who loved and appreciated them well enough to share their fate. To these must be added the free adventurers, men bold enough to risk the unknown and win

fortune or perish, therefore essentially different to the socialistically inclined Slav, whose nature it is to depend always upon his ruler, the State, or his fellows. Many of these pioneers succumbed to the hardships of the journey or the life; many left no successors. The isolated degenerate criminals would have become extinct as a class, but for the constant stream of their kind from Europe, so the portion of the population which is Siberian by birth and descent, is derived from either the best of the exiles, or the soldiery sent to guard the prisons and settlements. As yet these have not become a nation or distinct people, though they have certain marked characteristics. The Siberiaks, as the descendants of the early settlers in the west province are called, are of average height, and are square-built, sturdy men, with brown hair; the women are smaller, vigorous, and coarse featured. They are not communicative, have nothing of the Russian frankness, or peasant simplicity, and they speak a dialect containing many words of Siberian, perhaps Altaian, origin.

The official Russian view of the Siberiaks is that they are energetic and enterprising, capable of standing up for themselves and of struggling against misfortune; in character restless and dissatisfied; neither fit nor willing to submit to the existing order of things as established by law, impatient of all interference, and opposed to legal forms and the imposition of authority by administrators. They differ from the earlier settlers, the pioneers of Siberian colonisation, in being more peaceful, and better content with homely comforts, also lacking the warlike spirit of their ancestors.

The slow development of Siberia has been attributed to the penal settlements. Usually exiles were not sent to the most suitable districts for colonies, but distributed amongst the already settled population so long as the free or time-expired settlers were in a majority there. The principal

wholly penal settlements for criminals were in the most distant parts; the north, the far north-east, on the other side of Lake Baikal and when not near mineral deposits — gold, silver, mercury, platinum, &c. — on Crown lands, were located beyond the limits of ordinary colonisation by free settlers. The short-term criminals after a few years' detention in a Siberian prison were liberated on condition that they went further east or north, and reported themselves at stated intervals to the police, whilst some were not banished into far Siberia, but might not leave the limits prescribed on their passport. These "free-commands," or ticket-of-leave men, are now the most dangerous class in Siberia, and form nearly 5 per cent. of the population. They are for the most part thriftless, improvident, idle, and dreaded by the exiles and free settlers. In the Trans-Baikal territory where the military Cossack contingent is fewer than 10,000 when on a war footing, and less than 3000 in times of peace, there are estimated to be nearly 20,000 time-expired convicts, and exiled settlers; but wherever seven thousand or more of these live, the Government officials do not know, for the passport system has quite broken down in Siberia. There are special settlements for time-expired criminals like the "Convict's Hamlet" near Vladivostok, but they are not altogether successful.

The Trans-Baikal Cossacks were in part formed of convicts and exiles Muraviev took from the Crown mines and made into soldiers. It was then thought that these men would have everything to gain and nothing to lose by being turned into settlers. They were given land on the Amur and made much of; some retaliated by engaging in piracy on the river, where they were known as the "Pet Sons"; some actually fought against the Russian troops, and others waylaid the convoys and made away with the military supplies.

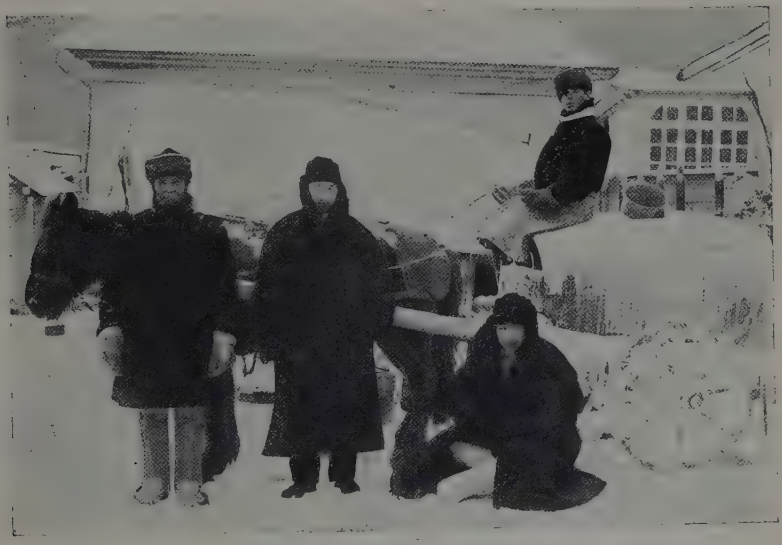
Compared with Russia, Siberia is inadequately policed. There are towns, or rather great sprawling villages miles

in length, with a population of from five to ten thousand, amongst whom are known bad characters, and yet only a couple of score policemen. The individual guards his property and his person as best he can; trivial offences cannot be noticed, and the perpetrators of the worst crimes often escape undetected. The settlers know this, and it is a very good schooling for the Russian peasant, who in Russia, from cradle to grave, is never taught to rely upon himself.

The village agriculturists absorb quickly. When Ivan is in Siberia he soon feels that he is no longer a mere taxed item in an overtaxed commune, but an individual possessed of some rights as a man, and the member of a family. The outward sign of emancipation from thraldom is a better carriage and greater freedom in speech. Then Ivan is not long in Siberia before he wears his *rubashka* like a Western European and gets his hair cut soldier fashion, which is general throughout Siberia — thus the settlers are not so picturesque as they were when Great, White, or Little Russian peasants.

Siberia is not only larger but it is greater than Russia. It is the better half in the sense that the people are superior, from the British or western point of view. The further from the capital the greater the freedom. In Siberia it is possible to do things one could not do in older Russia. In the first place, the distance is so great that every little trouble could not be sent to St. Petersburg for settlement; the governors and officials had to decide without reference to their central departments. Moreover, the Russians who were found in Siberia were, as a class, difficult to control; men who felt they were so near the deepest bottom of hell that whatever they did, or failed to do, could make but little difference in their condition. For one Russian official who is a martinet insisting upon the fulfilment of every law to the letter, there are a score who are content if the spirit of the special regu-

HORSES OF THE TRANS-BAIKAL COSSACKS



SIBERIAKS AND WATER-CART

lations is recognised, and fifty who find it easiest to let people have their own way within as wide limits as the written law is capable of being construed. As a rule the men are reckless, the officials lazy.

Forced to shift for themselves, the exiles, settlers, and released convicts formed society as nearly in accordance with their own ideals as circumstances permitted. The sectarians who suffered exile rather than sacrifice their faith have settlements far in advance of the average Russian village, whilst the political exiles made themselves a home as good as they knew how to make it, and devoted their spare time to studying the natural history of the country around them. Later settlers come into contact with these men who have struggled against the State and survived; they become more independent, talk of their rights instead of asking for privileges, and soon — not having suffered the penalty — assume the freedom of action. For the Russian to travel overland towards the sunrise is itself an education. He mixes to some extent with fellow passengers higher than he in the social scale, he observes them closely, what they claim as their due he claims. Men who have been convicted of crimes — from petty larceny and mutiny to murder — tell the stories of their lives and the stories they have heard; they tell the new-comer how they themselves have fared, what they have demanded and how much has been granted them, the dangers to expect, and the means others have taken to overcome difficulties.

There is a large prison population, and deportation for certain offences is still the practice. As I have never visited a prison I can write nothing of the life there, but I may state that I met a foreigner who had recently visited the penal settlements in order to make a confidential report to his Government respecting them, and by him I was informed that, generally, the prisons were superior to the homes of

the peasants, and that prison life was comparatively easy, the whole system being milder and the treatment more humane than in England.

The worst centre was in Sakhalin Island, where, apart from the miserable climate, the work is hard, the company bad, and the administration so lax that an inquiry is proceeding to investigate serious charges against the governor and prison officials.

The prisons of Sakhalin are replenished from European Russia, the convicts being conveyed to Vladivostok by the ships of the Volunteer Fleet, and thence to destination by those of the Eastern Chinese Railway Company. The trains for *Arrestanti* on the Siberian railways — much better than those placed at the disposal of peasant immigrants — are used chiefly for local defaulters, and the same may be said of the barges on the Amur and Shilka; but some prisoners still journey by the overland route, as amongst those on the *Minerva* barge I passed moored to the river bank was the murderer of Mr. Bogoliepov, the Minister of Education. The convicts there were passing the time angling through the bars, using willow poles, and getting fair sport.

The peculiarly Russian view is shown in regard to the women convicts. All females sentenced to hard labour are shipped to this far-away island colony "with a view to secure the family principle," and, according to an official publication, as soon as a party of female prisoners arrive they are immediately taken up by the settlers "without reference to age, merely as women, wives, and housekeepers."

The males are in excess throughout Eastern Siberia, being in Sakhalin in the proportion of six to four. In Khabarovsk the males are only 27 per cent. of the town population, but there and in Vladivostok there are enormous garrisons to account for the disparity.

CHAPTER X

THE GOLDEN EAST

FOR certain reasons, probably more or less directly connected with the profits of company-promoting, some English people regard the Far East as a gold-producing country of immense importance. As a matter of fact, the average yield of the whole Russian Empire is only about five millions sterling per annum, which is less than a third of the average output from the South African Rand. The quantity is declining rather than increasing, and this notwithstanding the new mines coming into work. The richest field is that of the Vitim district, in Central Siberia, and even here the best mines, those of Sibiriakoff, are said to be almost worked out. The Germans have not formed a single company to mine for precious metals in Russia, England has a dozen, though as Russians know well, gold-mining investments yield no dividends compared to those derived from exploiting petroleum, or base metals, or founding manufacturing industries.

It is impossible to treat of the whole of Siberia as one gold-producing region, some parts of the country differ so much from others, and in each province local regulations are in force respecting mining for precious metals. Dividing the country into different separate sections, the most characteristic are — from west to east — the Western district comprising the Northern and Southern Urals; the Central district, the valley of the Yenisei, the Altai, the Vitim field; the East, the

Nerchinsk centre in Trans-Baikalia, the Amur-Zeya and Amur-Nikolaievsk districts, the Ussuri district, the deposits on the Okhotsk Littoral, in Kamchatka, Arctic Siberia, and Sakhalin, and the gold regions of Manchuria and Mongolia within the Russian sphere of influence.

The Ural region comprises the mountain range between Perm on the Kama to Orenburg, and mining there in modern times dates from the middle of the eighteenth century, but discoveries made in the Chemiashev mine proved that working for minerals had been practised in the prehistoric period. In 1835 a mint was established at Ekaterinburg, and auriferous quartz was first noticed at Berezovsk, within a few miles of that town. Then similar quartz veins were discovered at Minsk and Troitsk. They were not extensively worked nor have they proved very profitable, being considered of inferior importance to the gold gravels in the south-east valleys of the range. The Mias centre, in the Orenburg section, is at present the most productive; the old Podvintsev Company has an output of 50 poods. The Tarasov, Simonov, Sokolov, and others about 10 poods each. The Vladimir, and six others, five poods each, and from Bogoslavsk in the north, to Verkhne-Uralsk in the south, the gold produced yearly is from 550 to 580 poods, worth about one and a quarter million sterling, of which 40 per cent., equal to 10 per cent. of the production of the whole empire, is from the Trans-Ural district of the Orenburg Government. The best centres in addition to these mentioned are Nijni-Tagilsk, Bizersk, Berezovsk, Kyshtym, and Kachgar, but as yet the Northern Urals have not been thoroughly prospected. The alluvial gold has been washed down from quartz reefs, but there has been so far very little attention given to working these, although they are known to exist near the spots where placer mining is practised. The yield from gravels could be increased by using better machinery.

A LANDING ON THE AMUR RIVER

In Central Siberia there is alluvial gold in the Ob and Yenisei river basins, and in those of the tributary rivers from the east. The auriferous gravels vary in thickness from six to eleven feet, and have a top burden of soil and turf. The uninterrupted beds, fit for exploitation, are from half a mile to twenty-five miles in length. The coarser grained gold nuggets are at the top, the nearer the bed rock the smaller the particles, until at the bottom there is only fine dust.

The meaning of the word Altai is "golden," and in that range the remains of Chud workings have been found in many places, where there is auriferous quartz. Gold reefs have been discovered in the Yenisei district and more recently near Maryinsk in the Tomsk Government.

The Lena valley has also gold deposits and in that of one of its tributaries, the Vitim to the north of the Lake Baikal in Yakutsk territory, are the Sibiriakoff mines in the richest field yet exploited in all Siberia. The working dates from 1851, and for thirty years the annual output varied from 419 to 939 poods. The maximum yield is from the Alexandrovsk mine, 8 zolotniks 19 doli from 100 poods of gravel, which is equal to 1 ounce 55 grains to the cubic yard, or 11 penny-weight to the miner's ton. In the neighbouring groups, the Barbara mines yield from 70 to 85 poods; the Olekminsk Company's working, 80 to 130 poods; and the Lensk Company produce from 170 to 180 poods, the Vitim from 170 to 230 poods. The district is 750 miles north-east of Irkutsk, and reached by road from that town to the Lena, thence by river. The mines of Central Siberia, called the "Eastern" Siberian territory, are controlled by the mining boards of Tomsk and Irkutsk. Alluvial gold was found in 1830, and lies in or near river beds, from which it is dredged. Achinsk, Minusinsk, Krasnoyarsk, and Kansk are the centres of different groups; the Biriutinsk field comprises the Kansk and Nijni-Udinsk

districts, worked since 1842, in which year the season's clean-up amounted to 204 poods, but is now trifling. The other group has also a lessening output; 20 poods was the maximum output (1894) from one group; 5 poods seems to be the average output of the largest workings, whereas in the first ten years, 1840–1850, the yearly produce was over 1000 poods. In all, some twenty-seven thousand poods to the total value of £35,000,000 has been obtained, and the regular decrease is said to be due not to the exhaustion of the deposits but to faulty prospecting.

In the Trans-Baikalia the auriferous gravel has been worked since 1777, and the quantities obtained are now increasing year by year. The yearly output is 230 poods, of which half is from Crown mines. There are 81 mines in the Barzuzinsk district, and further east, in the Nerchinsk district, the richest, 32 of which belong to the Crown.

The Amur territory ranks third among the gold-producing regions of the empire. It comprises the mines on the Jalonda and Oldoi rivers, discovered in 1866; of the Zeya, found 1863; of the Bureya, 1874; the Sutori and Bidjan, 1866. The Nikolaievsk region is really part of the littoral territory, being chiefly on the Amgun, some 220 miles from the town, with mines having a total output of 100 poods.

Prospecting and exploring expeditions have found gold in Kamchatka, all along the Pacific Littoral, and in the great Bay known as the Sea of Ohkotsk, is the Udsk district, which was thrown open in 1898 to private exploitation, and peremptorily closed by telegraphic order in 1901. The Ussuri basin contains gold, and the territory has been worked by the Chinese from time immemorial, but the present output is inconsiderable.

Manchuria has rich gold deposits, especially in the Khingan Mountains, and in many parts these could be worked

advantageously by the simple gold-digger, but at present the country is closed entirely to foreign exploitation, and certainly will never be open to the adventurous gold-digger. The gold mines in Northern Mongolia are also worked under Russian protection. The most important are exploited by an international company registered in Belgium, which agreed to return the gold to the Irkutsk Mint and thus to the Russian State. The workings on the Onon, Ura, and Tolu creeks are expected to clean up to the value of £40,000 in 1901, from which it may be assumed that the company has not become possessed of a second Klondyke.

The methods of mining vary, although it is principally placer mining throughout the territory. In Central Siberia, which may be taken to comprise both the Governments of Western and Eastern Siberia, forming the low plain between the Urals and Lake Baikal, dredging is the usual method. Dredgers will pay with earth yielding four doli to the ton. In the South Yenisei district the average yield, based on returns received from over 200 claims in the district, is twenty-two doli to the ton. This, of course, when pay-earth is reached; the over burden to be recovered first will reduce the average to eleven doli the ton of earth dredged.

The usual bucket, and also dip dredgers are used, the best being imported from New Zealand by way of London and St. Petersburg. The ocean carriage is of less moment than that overland from the port of entry. There is no duty on mining machinery, and much is imported from Holland and France, as well as America. The most important item in cost is the conveyance of the dredger and other machinery from the nearest railway station on the Siberian railway to the place required, and erecting it there. Usually a road has to be made.

Claims are issued only to Russian subjects, who may

assign their rights within certain specified limits. Having prospected successfully, and declared the find of gold in the manner prescribed, the prospector has the right to that claim, up stream from the point named, and in about nine months' time, if all requirements are fulfilled with promptitude on the part of the claimant, the right to mine is issued. A company working such right should possess not less than five claims, or, say, a square verst, 281 acres, and have two dredgers. A working capital of £25,000 beyond the price paid for the mining right should prove sufficient, unless a roadway of more than one mile has to be constructed. Transport is cheap up to the end of June; after that date the demand for labour and horses in harvesting make it comparatively dear. Half the year the dredgers remain idle.

A quartz claim may consist of four square versts, but reef mining is rarely attempted, the yield from placers proving more satisfactory.

In the Amur province the gold mining is of a somewhat different character. The Jalonda mines were worked by the Upper Amur Company for twenty years, and some 2000 poods raised; the workings were then leased to employés of the company. Of the fifty-eight areas, fifteen are worked by small miners, voluntary diggers who contract to re-work the area, and deliver the proceeds to the owners of the mines at a stipulated price. These workers are chiefly Chinese. The maintenance of a Siberian workman costs about £100 yearly. The output from the district is less than sixty poods per annum. The same company own fifty sections on the Zeya, and work not more than ten simultaneously, obtaining by primitive process 120 to 150 poods yearly. The miners are mostly Siberian peasants whose maintenance costs £120 a year. Other mines on the Zeya, Jalon, &c., were formed into the United Company in 1894. The Leonov mine has

THE BANKS OF THE UPPER AMUR

AMERICAN GOLD-DIGGERS POSTING TO VITIM

produced over 738 poods; the cost of maintenance is from £140 to £160 per head, and 15 per cent. of the labourers are Chinese. Of 250 sections allotted in this district less than fifty have been worked. The Bureya working, some 350 miles from Blagoveshchensk, produces seventy poods yearly, the yield being about fifteen pennyweights to the ton. Twenty per cent. of the diggers are Tungus, Chinese, and Koreans. The Sutari and Bidjan workings are let to Chinese and free diggers, who receive two roubles and a half for each zolotnik — quarter ounce of gold — brought in. A quarter ounce of fine gold is worth ten roubles, or, say, 21*s*.

In the Maritime provinces, the littoral of the Sea of Okhotsk, gold mining is carried on with difficulty owing to the severe winters and short summers. The conditions approximate those of the Klondyke, and mining has been actually commenced in Russian territory opposite Cape Nome. The workmen cost £170 yearly to maintain; Chinese, Koreans, and Yakuts number but about 25 per cent. of the mining population. There are similar mines at Uda due north of Nikolaievsk. As in the Olekminsk district, gold is obtained by digging, or from the auriferous gravel found in the river beds, the water being diverted to new channels in order to get at the deposits. There are also wing-dams and other mining expedients employed, and there is mining by underground galleries, the gravel being raised to the surface by a horse winch.

Okhotsk district, with its ninety working days in the year, is rich in gravel gold; the small nuggets belong not to the mine owners, but to the finder who sells to the company at the rate of three roubles the zolotnik, as they are entitled to do by Russian law, but as there is a little dust, the companies have thus to pay for raising and washing the earth.

In the Ussuri district the mines are said to be worked out, for in the south, at least, the mines have been worked from

prehistoric times, the region being a No-man's Land over-run by adventurous Chinamen gold-diggers and their kind.

Probably all over that portion of Northern Asia which is east of Baikal, gold exists in the alluvial deposits above the once submerged primeval forests. It exists also in the gravels below; but, rich though that gravel may be, it is useless to attempt to mine it in perpetually frozen earth as deep as that recently discovered by experimental borings. For instance, in the Vitim district borings revealed perpetually frozen earth at a depth of 150 feet, amongst which is gold. Elsewhere there are mines rich in this unobtainable gold imbedded in frozen earth. Such mines cannot be worked profitably. Nor is it profitable to attempt dredging in the rivers where the earth is full of huge boulders, as is the Ussuri; or, where time is of importance, to devote labour and machinery to the extraction of the last fraction of gold from tailings. The best returns come from dredging in the upper valleys of accessible rivers, where it is possible to get into position a boiler of 150 h.-p.; without having to make a road for its transport longer than twenty miles, where the labour is cheap, and claims are plentiful. There are such districts, and on them the gravel may be treated successfully by companies possessed of a working capital of, say, £35,000.

Much of the gravel and many of the lodes would be worked to greatest advantage by gold-diggers and small companies. Eastern Siberia particularly feels the need of such workers.

The mining regulations are so framed as to preclude the activity of such men proving profitable to themselves. The laws are in favour of capital, not labour. Labour is cheap, about one-tenth of what it costs in America; there is convict labour at thirty copeeks (eightpence) a day of fourteen hours; emigrants at eighteen pence to two shillings a day; skilled

artisans, such as bricklayers and carpenters, at half-a-crown a day. Women labourers get a shilling a day, and women make the best teamsters. Truly there is no gilt on the east for the workers, whatever there may be for capitalists.

The independent gold-digger is not allowed to start away with pick, pan, and shovel to prospect and to stake out a claim which he can work himself or with a partner. Chinese and others have attempted this, and have been driven away by Government troops. The gold digging as it used to be, and is practised in America and Australia, is here termed robbery, or "rapacious exploitation of Crown property." Yet this gold is mostly alluvial, and much could be obtained by the working digger. Formerly the Government protected itself against that class by making the possession of gold dust a penal offence; now that the country is more settled, it feels itself strong enough to regulate the industry in other ways.

Russian methods of taxing the mines have been severely criticised both in Russia and abroad; expenses are so heavy that the operations rarely bring in a satisfactory profit to the shareholders. It is considered impossible to mine any of the Crown lands profitably, the conditions of their lease being so onerous, and the private properties are not regarded with great favour by foreign investors.

The private owners of land, who must be Russian subjects, can mine gold on their property under proper supervision. Foreigners can acquire a share in the output by forming a joint-stock company in accordance with Russian law, which requires that for practical purposes the property be vested in a trustee, a Russian subject, who by power of attorney is empowered to deal with the property of the company as the local authorities may require. Usually a deposit of some £3000 is required as a guarantee for the fulfilment of the obligation. The gold-mining company must pay the wages of a policeman for each

thirty hands employed, a police inspector, an assistant mining engineer, a physician, and part of the salary of the Justice of the Peace; must provide houses, clothing, food, arms, and conveyances; must pay the duty of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on the output, in addition to refining and mint fees, taxes on capital and profits, and take out numerous licences, general and local. Whoever having had a licence to prospect for gold in a certain defined locality shall declare a find and make a claim, may receive the licence to work the claim some nine or twelve months after application has been made for it. From this it may be judged that the procedure preparatory to mining for gold in Siberia is much more akin to that required for working precious metals within Great Britain than are the mining laws of a new country.

The initial difficulties are of minor importance when the yield is rich and the working easy. In Siberia nothing as rich as Klondyke, or the Rand, California, or Ballarat, has been found; and almost without exception the working is difficult, and, the cheapness of labour notwithstanding, comparatively expensive.

The Russian Government is aware that the development is unsatisfactory and has recently amended the mining laws; the changes chiefly consisting in the reduction of Crown dues.

From the year 1902 the tax on each dessiatin will be reduced, thus the gold-fields of Olekshim district will be taxed at the rate 5*s.* 5*d.* instead of 21*s.* 2*d.* for each dessiatin (2.7 acres); in the Amur region the tax will be reduced to 3*s.* 3*d.* instead of 10*s.* 11*d.*; in the Maritime provinces no change, and in other places to 1*s.* 1*d.* instead of 2*s.* 2*d.* In this manner the tax per dessiatin is, generally speaking, reduced by about one-half, and in those parts where unfavourable conditions for the extraction of gold obtain, the tax will

be three and a half, and even four, times lower than it is at present.

From the same date royalties in kind will be abolished and a tax substituted, in proportion to the profitableness of the mines, and the owners of the allotments will be consulted in apportioning the tax, but in any case the tax so imposed will be less than the amount at present collected. The obligation to deliver gold into the Government mints will be abolished, and the free circulation of raw gold permitted.

The laws as amended do not extend to gold-fields belonging to the Crown, leased for exploitation to private individuals, or to some districts of the Trans-Baikal region.

Private laboratories and refineries may be established; the number of Government laboratories is to be increased, and a project of improved legislation has been elaborated, the result of which will be to do away with a number of the formalities which at present hamper the activity of the mining industry.

Further information based upon recent investigations by surveyors, together with statistics and descriptions, are in process of publication.

These concessions are good in a way, but what is required is a definite fixed policy. As recently as 1898 the Russian Government asked the public to exploit the gold-fields in the Maritime provinces. In January 1901 they offered leases of certain properties in the Okhotsk district by public auction. Russian subjects as well as foreigners might bid, and whether private individuals or joint-stock companies had only to comply with the regulations, and subscribe the conditions of the leases.

On July 18, 1901, the Governor-General of the Maritime provinces received from the Minister of State Domains, by whose order these same properties had been offered to the

public, a telegram commanding him to proclaim the closing to all exploitation of gold and naphtha, all the territory lying within a hundred versts — sixty-six miles — of the coast, also the Island of Sakhalin and neighbouring islets. The prohibition to take effect on the publication of the proclamation, which was to be announced forthwith. That the return of payments made in respect of prospecting licences and the like, must be asked for before October of the same year, and the Governor-General had power, together with the Minister of State Domains, to interfere in cases where parties had already secured titles in the territory closed, providing the titles had been obtained by Russian agents and firms. In short, the territory was abruptly closed without a word of warning, or any reason, to all foreign exploitation.

The news was received with consternation in the Maritime provinces, and many were the explanations given to me by officials and others for what is apparently a direct breach of faith on the part of the Russian Government. Really, no one knew of any reason: it was an order from St. Petersburg; in time it would probably be rescinded; it was a temporary measure directed against the Japanese; but meanwhile it stands, a clear demonstration of the Russian official attitude towards the exploitation of the natural resources of the country by foreign energy with imported capital.

As already stated the Government policy is not directed towards the enrichment of the workers, the settlers, or the adventurers within the empire. Its one apparent object is to increase the wealth of the State directly. The natural resources of the country, particularly the mining of gold, may not be developed except in such manner as the Government determines, but as long as they remain unexploited Russia is not the richer.

Professor Mendelieff asserts that the Ural region has

THE CENTRE OF KHABAROVSK

illimitable supplies of iron ore, and sufficient charcoal to produce from that ore several million tons of pig iron; but as long as fuel and ore belong to the Russian Government and may not be worked by private enterprise, the industries dependent on iron may consider the deposits as non-existent. In just the same manner much of the gold of Siberia is, and is ever likely to remain, ungotten and as ungettable as that at the bottom of the Black Cañon of the Fraser river. Little of it is so easily mined that burdensome restrictions can be imposed, and certainly Russians themselves are not mining so generally that the State can afford to exclude foreigners from engaging in the exploitation of natural resources its own subjects neglect. Competition is to be desired; the investment of capital is still more necessary to the progress of the country, which, as often stated, has many serious rivals in the Far East and elsewhere.

Russia has so far succeeded in Korea as to prevail with that Government to make its mining regulations similar to those of Russia: in Manchuria Russia intends to secure the monopoly of mining, banking, and minting, as well as for all railways; Mongolia, for all purposes of gold mining, is Russian territory, yet any one of these countries offers the gold hunter better prospects than does Siberia. Therefore in the interests of Siberia the miner, whether native or foreigner, should be encouraged. That the taxes are too heavy is proved by the immediate increased activity which followed the lightening of certain dues in 1876, and the stagnation which followed directly upon their reimposition a few years later. The country, and this industry particularly, requires to be nursed, and its exploitation encouraged, before Siberia can make any claim to be considered any part of the Golden East.

CHAPTER XI

ON THE ROAD

THERE is plenty of travelling by road, rail, and river, in Siberia. The common salutation there "Putiem Dorojki!" may be rendered "Moving along!" and the formal answer, "And may you do the same!" are indicative of being "on the road," probably in reference to the long journey by the great highway which was trodden by the exiles in times gone by, but it truly indicates the Siberian character to-day. If the Russo-Slavs were not nomadic by habit — as the inhabitants of wide open plains they ought to be, though savants contend that *these* people were not — then perhaps the long communication with Tartars and wandering tribes has imbued the race with the liking for wandering which the Russians now undoubtedly possess.

When serfdom was first instituted it was not an easy matter for the Government to make the serfs keep to the estates and locations to which they were assigned; later, wandering serfs were as common as are the travelling peasants now. Villagers go regularly to distant towns and districts to work, and the Siberian railways afford easy and cheap transit to the Far East, of which all classes make frequent use. It is not rare to find labourers going from European Russia to Manchuria for a few months' work, without any intention of settling in Siberia at all, and this fact explains in part the heavy passenger traffic by immigrant trains from east to west.

Mention has been made of the wandering mendicant in

Russia; he is not a stranger in Siberia, and always collecting for the same object — a new church in some village. Then there are the vagrant ticket-of-leave men, some tramping back to Russia, who, with unsuccessful immigrant agriculturists and disheartened workmen, constitute the greater number of the foot passengers along the railway route, begging a ride occasionally, stealing one more often, and occupying themselves in the intervals by "counting ties," as the Americans say. Their belongings they carry in a canvas sack on their back, sometimes balanced across their shoulder with another hanging in front of them, and always having attached the tea-kettle without which no Siberian travels. They take life easily and philosophically, being content with slow progress and the comforts they carry with them, or can have for the asking.

No Russian will walk if he can find anything to carry him, but, excepting the Cossacks, they are not horsemen. There is little of horseback riding for pleasure or sport at St. Petersburg and Moscow, and not enough in Siberia. The Tartars and the Kirghis of the plains all ride; so do the Mongols; some natives ride on oxen, some on stags — both maral and reindeer — others use camels, and in Mongolia and Manchuria mules and asses are common, though rarely seen in Siberia and Russia.

The Russian likes to ride in a wheeled conveyance, or on a sledge; driving is not generally regarded as a pleasure, but as work to be done by a servant. The vehicles are characteristic, and all conform more or less closely to the national type. This is the *telega*, a four-wheeled contrivance of the simplest construction to which the common timber carriage bears closest resemblance. It is the mere skeleton of a waggon or carriage, consisting of front wheels and axle through which and a bolster the king-pin passes. Instead of being connected to the rear axle with a single perch, there are at least two

timbers, and the hind-hounds run from these to the axle projecting beyond the wheels. The shafts are hooked on to the fore axle; from them go rope or leather stays to the extremities of the axle. A bow of tough wood called the *duga* — a development of the yoke — serves to spread the shafts. This goes over the horse's withers but does not touch them, and harnessing consists in binding the shafts with leather thongs to the hames of the collar. There are no traces, and long breeching is used to keep the collar from slipping forwards.

No better system exists for rough roads. The horse pulls directly on the axle, and the tendency therefore is to lift the wheel from a hole, or over an obstruction on the road. In the case of a sudden jar to a wheel, the shafts, through the duga, both take part of the strain, and are not so likely to snap; forming altogether a spring, the horse also is saved from many concussions the jolting of the vehicle over rough roads would otherwise inflict. Extra horses are attached with traces to an outrigger; on the left only, for a pair; on each side for the *troika*, the national team. The tandem is rare; a pair of horses with a pole, instead of shafts, is seldom seen except for foreign carriages. The telega and three horses abreast is the Russian peasant's limit; when more hauling strength is wanted, the load is divided; if this is impracticable another telega is requisitioned and attached to the first, if more, another, and so on, until the number needed is complete. To haul a large boiler in Siberia, thirty-five of these telegas, each with its team of three horses, were tied together, and the last one attached to the sledge upon which the boiler was fixed.

The loads taken, especially on long journeys, are very light, seldom exceeding a few hundredweight, and in some parts of Siberia 160 lbs. is considered a full burden. The horses are small and often lack muscular strength, though of extremely hardy constitution.

A travelled Russian having seen what English dray horses can haul, imported a Shire horse for agricultural work, and a carter accompanied the animal. The man had great difficulty in persuading the labourers to put on the telega a load worth taking. When no more could be heaped on, the horse threw himself into the collar; the duga, shafts, and axle all gave way together and the horse walked on with a few bits of the vehicle attached to the harness. Subsequent attempts also failed, and the horse was re-shipped to England.

The telega is varied by additions for carrying passengers. The perch, if flattened, will carry one or two sitting astride — a modified buck-board not uncommon even in Russia; the perch, widened to form a seat which is stuffed and covered with leather, makes of the telega the ordinary buck-waggon of Siberia. Still further widened, so that instead of sitting astride the passengers sit back to back, constitutes the true *drojki* found all over the empire. The little Victoria, introduced from abroad, is miscalled drojki, its right name is *proletka.* If the drojki be lengthened, the Moscow omnibus, the lineika, a vehicle like a four-wheeled jaunting car, is produced. If one or two extra bars are added to the telega, and these higher than the centre ones, the result is the peasants' travelling cart. Instead, fasten a wicker-work, boat-shaped body to the frame, and the better-class country waggon is complete. Put over one-half of this body a canvas hood and the Government regulation kibitka, or post-waggon, is made. The tarantass is like the kibitka, but has a box seat for the driver, and an apron and flap to the hood for the protection of the passenger, who is almost as well sheltered as though in a close carriage.

Ordinarily, none of these vehicles have seats, and the bodies are detachable from the telega, so that in winter they may be placed on sledges instead. They are all uncomfortable. The traveller takes his bedding, throws it into the vehicle, and

lies huddled on the top, as it is the only cushion between his body and the springless vehicle jolting over rough tracks.

The Siberian highway, called also the Moscow post-road, is the only made road in Siberia, and its quality varies, being generally worse the nearer it is to large towns. Other roads are tracks over steppes, or ordinary paths through the forest and over the swamps. That part of the Moscow post-road which runs by the Shilka and Amur between Stretensk and Khabarovsk, is a military road which cost 15 million roubles to construct, but is already in very bad repair, and in places impassable by vehicles owing to the falls of cliff into the river. Between Pokrovsk and Busse it is only a bridle path, and of the 1660 versts 900 are used by pack animals chiefly. There are 117 unbridged streams to be crossed, and only one has an efficient ferry. Everywhere the bridges are bad, and many need not only to be tested before crossing them, but to be strengthened by binding up with a rope carried for the purpose which is removed after the bridge is crossed, as it may be required at the next.

Spring and autumn are the worst seasons for travelling by road; the first because floods render bridges and roads dangerous, the second because where there are no bridges the rivers are too swollen to ford, too dangerous to ferry, and cannot be crossed until frozen over. Even along the Amur after the navigation has closed there is a season when communication entirely ceases. Only the autumn before last a party travelling west were too late for steamers beyond Pokrovka; they took horses along the post-road, but were stopped by a swollen stream, which could be neither forded nor ferried. After staying near Bulavki for a couple of months waiting for the river to freeze over, they returned to the east and relinquished their journey.

The Siberian post-stations are little more than shelters, but

many of the inns are no better, and differ from the post-houses chiefly in having one or more separate rooms for the accommodation of travellers. The common room of a post-house is very much the same as a waiting-room at a small railway station. It opens into the vestibule, with its double doors and dirty porch. The windows are small, often the panes missing replaced with tin, the lid of a biscuit box, or side of a kerosene can. The stove, a primitive arrangement made of sheet iron, stands in a box of earth which is the receptacle for cigarette-ends and the rinsings from the teapots. A small deal table, a couple of rough stools, and one or two benches complete the furniture. The samovar is always available, and, usually, a meal is procurable in the afternoon. Some of these houses are very dirty, but the majority are passably clean, and, used as the Russians use them, have adequate accommodation for guests prepared for rough travelling. Every traveller carries his own bedding, also a deer or bear skin or a square of felt to lie upon. It is the unwritten and never infringed law of Siberia that wherever a person has spread out his bedding that place is his inviolably, whether it be in a prison, station, steamer, railway-truck, or common room of an inn.

The time spent at a post-house may be no longer than necessary to change horses, as post-drivers go both by day and night, but when there are no horses or the roads are bad, or a river cannot be crossed, then the delay may be for days or even weeks. The guests spend most of the hours on their bedding; they play cards — all games from Moskovski durak to vint — until they become quarrelsome. If the weather be fine, some go out and try to get sport with gun or rifle, but most are content to lie reading and smoking, or pace to and fro grumbling at the delay. All sleep a great deal. There never were people so fond of sleep, so able to sleep anywhere at any time. They just wake to eat, smoke,

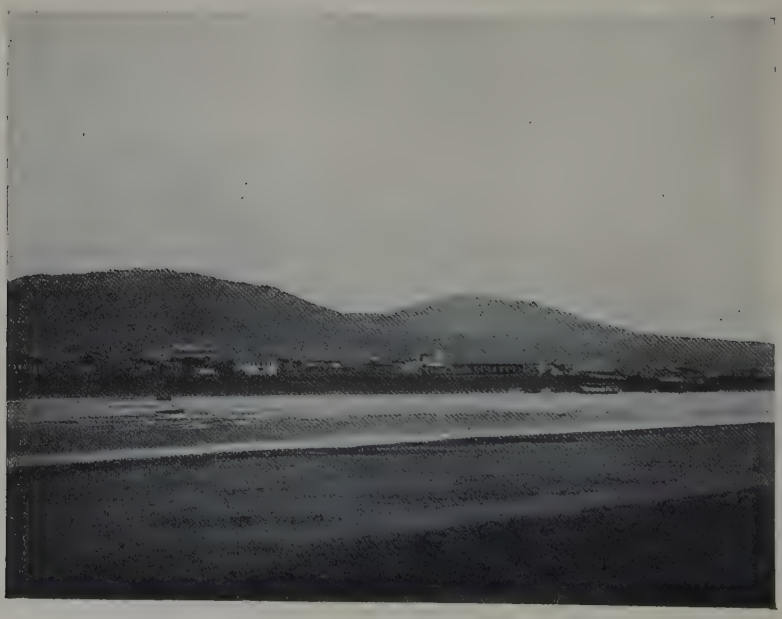
and sleep again. Some peasants in Esthonia practically hibernate; with very little practice the Siberians could acquire the habit too.

Posting is cheap: the tariff is about three copeeks per horse per verst, with a tax of twelve copeeks for the hire of the vehicle each stage, ten for each horse each stage Government tax, wheel oil six, and ten copeeks drink money to the driver comprise the usual expenses; for an additional twenty copeeks the vehicle will pick up or set down the fare at any address in town instead of at the post-station. The rate of travel is eight miles an hour in summer on the highway, six and a half in winter and on by-roads, five in spring and autumn.

Government officials have first call upon the horses of the station; next to them, those furnished with an official road-passport, without which few persons will attempt to travel post. A Government official can not only take horses out of turn, before people arriving earlier are served, but may unhitch horses already harnessed to vehicles of the private traveller at or near a post-house, but not on the highway between post-stations. In practice the Government official posting commandeers everything he needs.

A Consul-General tired of the delays on the road, once persuaded the Governor of his town to allow him to be described on the road-passport as simply General V. — without the prefix Consul — being sure that the paper would get him better attention. At the first stage where horses were not immediately forthcoming this pass was produced. Still, there were no horses, not even for a General. In the post-house he overheard the master and drivers conversing; "General?" said one, "he's no General! Why, he does not even swear! He mustn't have horses at all! Keep him here, Ivan Ivan'ich! Keep him here until the Governor knows about him from us." And Ivan did.

A SIBERIAN OMNIBUS



STRETENSK ON THE SHILKA RIVER AND MOSCOW POST ROAD

Along settled routes many people use their own vehicles, hiring peasants' horses; others take a peasant's telega too. The price is often less than the official rates; but where horses are short at the stations, they are then very much higher.

Exactly the same principles apply to posting in the north, with reindeer and dogs to draw the sledges. The actual travelling is unenjoyable; there is little change of position possible, no change of scene, and always considerable risk of injury through the overturning of vehicles, particularly of the sledges, and it is not uncommon to find the victim of an accident lying up at a post-house, whilst a broken limb heals sufficiently to enable the patient to conclude the journey.

Almost everywhere in the empire conveyances of all kinds are insufficient for the traffic. Road vehicles are no exception; though in some districts, where the land transport of merchandise has decreased, there may be a temporary glut of peasant carts. In towns the dearth extends even to the isvoshchiks who, instead of clamouring to be taken, as they do in the Russian capitals, have to be sought for and coaxed to take a fare.

None will post by road who can travel by rail or river.

To travel "Sibirski," or in the manner of the country, one must be provided with a tea-kettle, sugar, tea, and preserved provisions. A knife is necessary; forks, spoons, and plates are quite optional. Hot water is obtainable at all railway stations free; or, if preferred, may be bought for three copeeks from the buffet.

Train accommodation varies, but is consistently insufficient. By the post-train the first-class passenger has half of a compartment for two, closed by a sliding door from the corridor; in this car the head conductor travels, and it stops directly opposite the buffet at all stations. It will take at most twenty-five passengers, and they are usually officials of high rank;

officers' wives; commercial travellers on town-to-town journeys, and foreigners. The second-class carriages adjoining this centre car have very similar accommodation for ladies, an open saloon for smokers, and another for non-smokers. The passengers are officials, commissioned army officers, clerks, immigrants of the industrial and shop-keeping class; the third-class, similar to the second-class saloon, save that the seats are not upholstered or covered, and the berths are in three tiers instead of two. All classes, other than the poorest immigrants, travel third. The fourth-class has almost identical accommodation, but instead of separate berths the seats make large bunks into which as many persons as possible crowd. There is no fourth-class on the post-trains except when east of Lake Baikal.

Excepting those who travel first-class, the passengers in each compartment quickly fraternise; talk of their business, tell experiences, confer as to prospects, good humouredly accommodate each other to the best of their ability and render readily those little services which make travelling in company agreeable. The first-class traveller is not so communicative to fellow passengers. He shuts himself in his compartment, or, if more air is needed, the door is opened, but closes almost automatically at the sound of a footfall in the corridor. At the stations, the first-class passengers, after visiting the buffet, promenade up and down the short platform staring glumly at each other. After a day or so of this sort of thing, the conventional exclusiveness of the highborn or high-ranked chinovnik softens, and the passengers form cliques, or perhaps a general company to which some individuals from the second-class carriages are admitted.

Though seclusion is the rule there are exceptions. One morning a General boarded the train on his way to take up an appointment in West Siberia. He was a Great Russian of the best type, a man of magnificent presence, excellent manners,

and charming conversation. A tall, broad-shouldered, erect, vigorous man of sixty, with white Dundreary whiskers, smooth chin, and spotless uniform. He was proud of his rank, vain of his appearance, and somewhat ostentatious, giving minute instructions to his servants in a loud voice, shouting orders to the station guards, and monopolising the attention of the railway officials everywhere as the way of Generals is. A young engineer, a graduate of a Moscow technical college, a small, insignificant-looking man, with head clean shaved, beard and moustache cropped close, and decidedly aggressive manners, engaged the General in conversation respecting the development of Siberia. The General was of opinion that practical men were wanted to exploit the natural resources of the country. The engineer agreed. Then he was a practical man; what had he done? He had been through the college. The General knew many men who had been through that college, and other colleges — they were not the sort of men wanted. In his opinion Siberia needed men who could do things; so many men from the academies knew what to do, what ought to be done, but not how to do anything.

The engineer spoke out gallantly for his school: experience was needed by the men turned out, that he agreed, but if they had acquired technical knowledge, if they understood the principles of engineering, were versed in the sciences, had a fundamental knowledge of mechanics, the school training enabled them to undertake work of any character. They needed only opportunities; with opportunities to apply the knowledge they had gained, they would have the experience necessary to enable them to accomplish whatever task they were set to do.

The General did not concur; one could no more learn how to make railways or exploit Siberia from the reading of books than one could learn fighting, or swimming, or walking, by reading. The modern methods were quite wrong.

Time after time, day after day, the discussion was renewed, always upon or around the same topic. The General held a salon; on one occasion or another all the passengers in the car took part in the dispute, some supporting the engineer, others the General; neither succeeded in convincing the other — the debate was quite academic. Once whilst it was progressing, the train was in a siding and, looking through the window, I saw a plate-layer adjusting the metals and driving in dog-nails to spike the rails to the sleepers. A tap with the hammer fixed the nail, then one blow swung right over the shoulder squarely on to the head of the spike drove it home — but the aim was wrong. The workman missed his stroke, not once, but several times. I counted. Of seventeen consecutive blows only five were correct; one struck the head of the rail, nine fell harmlessly upon the sleeper, two struck the spike untruly, and one of these sent the nail yards aside, where it was not even looked for. In small things as well as great Siberia needs practised men.

There are Generals with whom it is not pleasant for the mere civilian to travel. Officers who constitute themselves Tsars of the train, secure the best of everything, and even grade the passengers — having an immediate *entourage* of army officers who reflect their humour, haughty or condescending, according to the whim of their General. These are the men who rush to buffets, who, until their own needs are satisfied, permit no outsider to be served; who have the station gendarmes, and through them the porters and cabmen, at their sole disposal. Most, if not all, of the complaints brought by travellers of insufficient food at Siberian stations are due to the inconsiderate behaviour of army officers. There are buffet-restaurants at all the stations of the third and higher grades, and buffets at most of those of the fourth grade and a few of the fifth. Then there are settlers offering

for sale bread, eggs, milk, cooked meats, and fish, at most wayside stopping places as well as at the stations. The time is short, and the officers are first. There may be one or two dozen glasses at a small buffet, the officers take them, when they have each been served three times with boiling hot tea, others may have a chance if time permits. At the smaller stations the only appetising hot dish consists of meat pasties — the officers make a ring round the dish and devour them all, or purchase the lot and have them sent on to the train. Another dish is brought in to be treated in the same manner. At one I saw the officers, from the General down to the Army-Surgeon, form two lines from the kitchen door right up to the buffet; as each successive dish of hot pasties was brought in the servant had to pass between these two lines, the officers snatching what they could as the pies went by, and every time only an empty dish arrived at the sideboard. There were no more pies; the second bell rang, and as we disappointed hungry ones made our way back to the train I saw two former fellow-passengers pass to the fourth-class waggons munching pies. "You lucky fellows, how did you manage to get pies when there were not enough for the first and second class passengers?" I asked. They laughed. "Shall we tell him? Well, we went round to the back, to the kitchen, and the cook, she knew the dish would never reach the sideboard without some of the pies being taken, so instead of putting twenty on the dish she put only seventeen, and gave us the others, see?" So the buffetchik lost too.

At one station, when all the eggs offered for sale were in one basket, up stepped the General, "How many eggs are there?" he asked. "Forty." "Take them into the first-class waggon then." "For whom, sir?" "The General." "Isn't there any milk?" "Yes, sir, there is milk." "Is it

fresh or scalded?" "We have both fresh and scalded milk." "How much a bottle?" "Two grivni, sir." "How many bottles have you all together?" "We have seven bottles." "Then take them into the first-class waggon." "For the General, sir?" "Yes, for the General." The General stamped up and down the frost-covered platform to warm his feet. Then came the women from the second and third class carriages. "What! No milk? No eggs?" "No! our baby can't eat dry salt fish! What a miserable, wretched place this Taidut is!"

Coming out of Manchuria a Colonel of Cossacks contrived to get a good meal at each of three successive stations whilst I could not get served with even a dish of soup. The next day on the main line, I secured a seat at the large dining table of an important station, but my orders were unheeded. The buffetchik classed the company; first, the General and the Army Officers from St. Petersburg; next, the Officers of Cossacks and local corps; the director of the Russo-Chinese Bank and the son of a rich court chamberlain, next, lady passengers and the army medical officers, civil servants, and lawyers; then, a long way lower down, to be served after all others, the passengers whom he could not classify. A direct appeal to the restaurant keeper himself had no better effect. I called for the complaint book. The stationmaster had that. I sent for the stationmaster. He came; produced the complaint book; heard the complaint: turned upon the restaurant keeper — and I was served. In extenuation the buffetchik pleaded the company; there was the General, and the Colonel, and the bank director, so many people — evidently neglect of the ordinary was by no means unusual. In fact, he is so little regarded that I have seen a buffetchik snatch away a bottle of beer from a civilian to whom it had been served, because it was the last bottle and a chinovnik wanted it. My insistence served me well enough. A few

RAILWAY CAMP AT IRKUTSK

hours later whilst waiting my turn at the buffet, the Colonel asked me if there was anything he could order on my behalf, as then I should get it, and no one wanted another such "scandal" as I had occasioned that day.

Sometimes affairs are not any better on the express trains. The General and the *élite* of the first-class passengers take possession of the upper tables and remain hour after hour, scarcely permitting a waiter to pass by them to the further end of the car. They will arrive before the time fixed for the opening of the car to the public — they leave when they are ready to go. The civilian submits. On one such occasion having rung the bell several times without any other effect than bringing a waiter as far as the upper end of the saloon, where one of the General's party immediately sent him to execute some order, I kept the bell ringing. The controller appeared at the door, "Coming, coming!" he called. "He says so, but he does not come," sighed a Jew sitting near, so the bell rang on; every one was silent, and the waiter came. It must be mentioned that according to the Russian standard, the General was not ill-mannered, but I was. It is ill-bred and impertinent to be otherwise than servile to those of higher rank. Being a foreigner my behaviour was pardoned; any Russian who had dared to act in the same way would have been severely snubbed. The individual has no rights: I have seen a poor, ignorant fellow who had provided himself with a second-class ticket, moved by the conductor from a carriage of that class in which there were vacant places, to an overcrowded third, because this passenger was considered unfit company for the "intelligent class" travelling second.

Russians of the better educated class are all alike in one particular — the great friendliness they show to those strangers they deem of equal rank to themselves. Nearly all foreigners travelling across Siberia come into this category. It is

assumed that they are distinguished strangers, or they would not be there out of mere curiosity; they are rich, or they would not travel first-class. Many show their passports or the letters of recommendation received from one of the Ministries — perhaps a number from several — I have seen an American produce a bundle of large-sealed documents, and after seeing these, Russian officers smile and become studiously agreeable. The greater the intimacy, the better Russians are liked by strangers, for they exhibit the most endearing qualities as long as they remember that they must be on their best behaviour; and, as individuals, apart from their rank, the majority are really good-natured men.

Travel among the people, disregard their uncouth manners, get so used to disgusting habits that they cease to offend, and there will be found not so much to admire as to love. They are so very human. Tuck your trousers into jack-boots, put on a peaked cap and as a tramp try to beat your way a few days' journey, and in a very short time you will know how it is the army officers are so hated by the people.

Army officers, although always the most conspicuous of travellers, constitute but a small minority of the passengers by ordinary trains. Going east are all sorts and conditions of people: some to settle there, some seeking work, some going out to situations or to take up Government appointments; the wives of naval officers going to Vladivostok to join their husbands whose ships have been ordered to the Pacific Station; adventurers and adventuresses of all sorts determined upon amending their fortunes in Siberia; of commercial travellers very few, and of tourists scarce any.

Russians have large families and travel with them. Women and children seem to form a majority of the settlers. One doctor, the medical officer of a district, used to bring two or three of his family to table in turns; mama did the same. I

SIBERIAN STATION IN OCTOBER

THE SAMENESS OF SIBERIAN SCENERY

never saw all together — with the nurse his party numbered sixteen. A tradesman used to come sometimes with one little girl, sometimes with another, to purchase part of the midday meal at the buffet. The girl carried a pail into which about half a gallon of cabbage or beetroot soup would be emptied; a dozen meat pies generally completed the purchase, but at almost every stopping place he was buying eggs, milk, sausage, roast fowl, and huge loaves of bread. He had eight daughters and a baby boy; his wife, her two sisters, and other relatives made the party a strong one, even for Siberia.

There is a wonderful sameness about Siberian scenery; it quickly palls upon the tourist. The stations are all very much alike, differing chiefly in size from the terminus, a station of the first-class, to the section-nachalnik's office at a siding, which is of the sixth-class, though not really a station at all. Most are level with the line; a few are above it; then though the platform is level with the track, all the offices are on the top of the bank; one or two are below it, as Nerchinsk is, then passengers descend by flights of steps and long gangways to the station itself, a considerable distance away from the track.

The bill of fare varies but little in form; apparently it is according to official regulations, for each *menu* of the day is signed by the stationmaster. It is a sufficiently varied selection, but unfortunately the viands set forth are not always found, in this respect being like the portentous cards of the hash-houses of Western America, where all kinds of delicacies are enumerated as a matter of form, but all the customers order hash knowing they will obtain nothing else. So borsh — beetroot and bacon soup, or shchee — sour cabbage soup, meat pies, rissoles, and steak, comprise the average stock of the Siberian station; but the larger ones will have at midday either roast sucking-pig, mutton, or fowl in addition. Vege-

tables are rare, *sauté* potatoes the most general, unless preserved mushrooms, salted cucumbers, and fresh radishes are admitted. Tinned fish, — sardines and anchovies, — smoked salmon, and other fish from Lake Baikal, and fresh caviare near the rivers, form the available zakuski. Good vodka is obtainable all along the route, and Russian and French wines of stock brands at increasing prices the further east one travels. The management is lax: for instance, the notice that smoking is strictly prohibited at table is indeed exhibited according to the regulations set forth upon it, but the card itself is generally supported by match-boxes and ash-trays, and the rule itself universally ignored.

The solitary traveller is at a disadvantage; whenever he leaves his carriage his hand-baggage must be given into the charge of an attendant, or the conductor required to lock up the compartment, otherwise there will be losses. Travelling in a saloon, or with a crowd of passengers, some are always ready to remain to guard the baggage of all, and never once have I heard of this trust being betrayed. There are other advantages, as were recounted at some length by Sigismund Rudolfovich, a West Russian, the other occupant of a compartment when we were delayed one day between Shilka and Nerchinsk. The accident was of the usual type — the third experienced during one journey across Siberia — a heavy goods train had left the rails and blocked the track.

Sigismund was in a hurry to reach Vladivostok. This delay meant that the steamer he hoped to catch at Stretensk would have left by the time our train reached that terminus. The water in the river was low; there might not be any steamers, but if some of us going the same way clubbed together and hired a row boat we could float down the river to Pokrovka, where there were sure to be mail-boats to Khabarovsk. Nikolai Nikoláivich, a mining engineer going to the gold mines

near the mouth of the river, had not an hour to spare as his working season was at most sixty days, so he would be willing to do anything which would hasten his journey. He had been before, knew where to stay, and how to manage; thus it would be to our advantage to accompany him. Another reason; by pooling expenses for the transfer of luggage and hire of vehicles, we should all save money in the two thousand miles or so we were to travel together. In my own case there was no need for extra speed, but the opportunity was too good to be neglected.

There were others travelling in the same direction. Nikanor Nikoláivich, an official of the Eastern Chinese railway on his way to Kharbin; Nadéjda Pávlovna, with her two-months-old baby and a nurse, for the same destination where her husband, an army officer, was stationed. Evdokia Mikháilovna, the wife of an engineer, also going to Manchuria; Peter Pétrovich, an accountant at the State Bank at Blagoveshchensk, and Vasili Vasílievich, a leader of the Bar in the Amurski district — our party was to comprise these and others. Vasili, the great lawyer, would be a decided acquisition. Thus far he had distinguished himself by being always first in the buffet, a feat he accomplished by studying the time-table, and some time before the train drew up, blocking the exit from the corridor with his enormous bulk. Nikanor, by reason of his railway knowledge, would be a tower of strength. He was an excellent companion, but management was not his strong point; at Khabarovsk he had us roused in the small hours to start for the station where we were actually the first to arrive — three hours before the train was timed to depart. My claim to the consideration of the party was due to permission having been given me to make the lake-ferry by the larger vessel, whilst all the other passengers had been rushed into the little steamer *Angara*, which has very scanty saloon accommodation. It was

a rainy, stormy day; the vessel was overcrowded and all passengers had a wretched passage; then, though the *Angara* started long before the *Baikal*, the larger ship arrived first, and thus placed at my disposal the choice of berths in the train.

Instead of arriving in the afternoon the post-train reached the eastern terminus of the Siberian railway an hour after midnight. As at Irkutsk, the station is on one side of the river, the town the other, but at Stretensk there is no bridge. There were no vehicles waiting; the officials did not seem to know whether or not there were steamers in the river — they thought one had arrived and one private steamer ought to have left with the mails. Vasili sent his servant to the town to get telegas for his baggage; the immigrants shouldered their sacks and walked off to the "homes" on the ridge above the railway. Our preconcerted plan broke down at the outset — every one thought only of self. When dawn broke a thick mist hung over the river. The passengers ran down to the ferry to secure the carts as they arrived. Then they were loaded up — and I was left. A Cossack boy with a telega came up from his home on the railway side of the river, and I secured him whilst the other passengers were waiting at the ferry the arrival of other carts. He had a light load, and overtook the others before reaching the river. The ferry-boat was a barge anchored mid-stream on a long cable; simply by putting the helm over the current forces it from one side of the river to the other — there are many such *samolëti* in Siberia. Arrived on the town side, Nikolai went at once to the steamers; Sigismund and the others watched the carts with the luggage floundering through a foot of mud everywhere, and in places sinking up to the axles in water-holes; Vasili and I walked to the Dalni Vostok, the only hotel Stretensk possesses. The driver

SHILKA-AMUR STEAMERS LYING UP FOR THE WINTER AT BLAGOVESHCHENSK

of my cart, having the lightest load, was the first to arrive at the hotel; there was only one room vacant, and he had secured that for me. As a matter of course I invited the others to share the accommodation, and from that time I became an associate of the *artel*. Our plan of action was always the same: on arriving at a stopping place, Nikolai, as knowing it best, was first ashore, got into the first vehicle at hand and drove as fast as he could to secure the best available accommodation; Nikanor bargained for carts; Sigismund and myself saw to the safe loading and conveyance of the baggage. We purchased the necessary food at wholesale for the party; dined together, made one bargain, and, where needed, one complaint, so got better accommodation on trains, ships, and in hotels than any one of us singly would have been able to secure throughout the journey.

Two ships only were at Stretensk; the largest, not bigger than a steamer on the upper Thames, was already full, and she towed a barge about as big as a Thames randan, which had already its full complement. The other steamer was even smaller, a new stern-wheel craft built and engined on the Amur and drawing when light less than eighteen inches of water. The fare to Blagoveshchensk was ten roubles on deck; there was no saloon, and the only deck cabin, just in front of the funnel, was taken for fifty roubles in addition to the fare by Nadejda Pavlovna for herself, her baby, and Evdokia Mikhailovna. These fares are less than the regulation rates by the mail-steamers, which are 24, 12, and 6 roubles for first, second, and third class respectively, but the accommodation was only third-class, and there are no fixed rates for the season. On the next voyage this same steamer filled at once at twenty-five roubles ahead for the same distance, 1160 versts.

From Blagoveshchensk to Khabarovsk we travelled by the mail-steamers, 918 versts for nine roubles twenty-three copeeks,

second-class; double that fare is charged for first-class, and half for third. Those who intend to make the journey should take the smallest, or indeed any private boat when the water is low; and avail themselves of the superior accommodation of the mail-steamers at those seasons only when there is plenty of water in the river. The difference between the highest flood and lowest summer depth recorded is forty-one feet.

The continuation of the railway by the Shilka and Amur rivers will some day have to be undertaken, as the rivers are silting up, and each year there is less snow, owing to the destruction of the forests, and consequently less water. This is true of all the navigable rivers of Siberia, and of the Kama and Volga in European Russia. The post-steamers are too large, and for weeks together are laid up in pools unable to pass either up or down to the settlements on the river banks. The traffic, passengers and goods, therefore passes into the hands of the private companies. It must also be said that the captains of the Government boats will not take the risks the owner of a private boat will run. A mail-steamer drawing only $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet has not attempted a shallow where the minimum depth was five feet. The private steamer will attempt a passage on a few inches margin; if she gets aground she backs off — if she can. If she touches a bank or boulder, she expects to be carried over the obstruction by the wave she has left in her wake. Going down the Amur when the water is low is as exciting as skating over thin ice. With good luck you may make a record passage; with bad luck you may be on a sand-bank until all the provisions are consumed, until the deck passengers become hungry and riotous, and you escape robbery and death by paying salvage rates to some passing steamer or raft. Being myself in no particular hurry, I had the barren satisfaction of the quickest passage in the month, and met Eunson, the American boy who was racing round the world,

with his pacers towing a leaky punt up stream, just as though they were out for an afternoon's holiday at Twickenham. His steamer was passed fast aground a few versts further down. The route by the river Amur does not furnish a through connection between east and west; it is merely a makeshift until the railway is opened for general traffic. The river has 120 known shallows, or "perekat," and each steamer's pilot takes the channel he thinks to be the deepest.

There was no attempt at comfort on board the little private steamer. We just threw our bedding down in a corner, and for nine nights I slept on a plank over the main hatch. The boiler was separated by a bit of thin match-boarding from this cabin, in which thirty-one people slept; the hatches were partly off, and in the bilges eleven more people lay huddled like blacks in a slave dhow — most were Russians, some were Greeks, three were Chinese. The little fore-cabin under the wheel-house held nine, and the upper, or hurricane deck, was packed with as many of all sorts and conditions of men, women, and children as could crowd upon it. In all 163 passengers were carried on a steamer which in England might have been licensed for 120 if used solely for day excursions on a non-tidal river. The only free space was in the engine-room, but even there, at night, the crew spread out their bedding and slept.

The captain's chief duties were connected with the accommodation of the passengers, and the purchase of provisions and food. He blew the whistle, and conveyed the orders of the steersman to the engine-room. The navigation of the steamer was practically in the hands of one man, the river pilot, who steered nearly the whole way, and ate and slept in the wheel-house and looked ahead through a group of passengers crowded round the samovar on the bridge. He handled the vessel admirably, and from dawn to dark we went ahead at full speed

except through shallows, of which some were impassable, even for a vessel of so light draught as ours was, without lightening. There was no barge, so the passengers were landed and walked from a quarter of a mile to as much as two miles, and were then picked up and conveyed to the end of the next pool. Once only did the steamer get fast aground; that was whilst the passengers were ashore, and she was warped off after two hours' work.

A few hours after leaving Stretensk, heat haze thickened over the river; at times it developed into fog, or was increased in density by the smoke from immense, smouldering forest-fires. We passed through that fog in seven days, having scarcely as many hours' clear sunshine. Ordinarily it was not clear enough to see distinctly from bank to bank, and on some occasions we had to lie-to when the land marks were invisible. The whole of the Shilka-Amur is buoyed and lighted, signal posts being placed on both banks a few versts apart, but these are not of great use in the shallows, as the channel changes after each flood. Sometimes the pilot would go ahead in the jolly-boat and look for the channel, and having found it, return and steer the vessel through. Thus there was an element of uncertainty about the navigation which relieved the monotony of an otherwise tedious journey.

By day the heat was anything from 70° F. to 112° F.; at night it was too cold to sleep ashore without blankets. It was at night most of the passengers did not sleep. If it were not too dark when the vessel anchored off the Russian bank of the river, some went at once for a swim; the Chinese cooked and ate; the Russians lighted camp fires, and sang and danced around them until dawn was breaking — the long evenings round the camp fires out in the wilderness are the characteristic feature of the Amur voyage, the most enjoyable of experiences on the immigrants' long journey east. On two nights only out

"OFF THE LINE," NEAR KHILOK

WHEN THE RIVER IS LOW

of fifteen was a stay made near the desolate Manchurian shore. On one night the tapping of a wood-pecker in a distant clump was mistaken by a travelled Russian, a man who had been there before, "so must know," for the rattle of a snake, and, taking his word, the company went straightway back to the ship. On the other occasion the captain of the mail-steamer warned the passengers that there were tigers in that district, and that they would do best to remain on board, so the gangways were not even set up for the shore. Last year certainly the general impression among travellers by the river was that the authorities did not wish facilities to be given for any immigrants to land on the Manchurian side — where doubtless some of the travellers had intentions of squatting upon unoccupied land and probably of founding settlements. Then the whole southern bank was desolate. Of the once populous districts, the old Chinese posts, the forts, and the calling places, there are now scarcely any traces. At one point only was there a living being, other than Russian soldiers, to be seen. Near Dobraia the house-flag of one of the river steamship companies was flying over two miserable fantsas, and fuel was purchased. On the Russian bank were many settlements; none possessed any inn, nowhere was intoxicating liquor sold for consumption on the premises, and at most villages the chief traders were Chinese. The Russian settlers seemed to have very little surplus produce, such as eggs or milk, to sell; for vegetables they would not accept any offer, and were very slow to trade at all. Less enterprising people are not often met, either in Russia or Siberia, than these settlers in the Amur province.

At least twice every day the ship stopped for fuel, and whilst from five to twenty fathoms of wood were being carried on board the passengers went for a swim — the women up stream, the men down — or they went out into the wilds and gathered flowers, greenery, and roots, with which they deco-

rated their portion of the deck, or dissected for the purpose of illustrating arguments on the relative productiveness of Siberia and Russia. Almost invariably the verdict was in favour of the new country, but of its agricultural resources very little appeared to have been made.

The haze did not prevent the attacks of the winged insects, of which there were many kinds, from mosquitoes to hornets, both on board and ashore. The most troublesome was the green-eyed horsefly — the pest of East Siberia. We passed many steamers lying up; rafts thronged with emigrants floating down stream; dug-outs of Giliaks and other of the native Siberians, wretched rough punts of the Russian settlers, and between the Sungari and Ussuri, a few Chinese junks. The fog hid from our view the wide river flats, and the heights of the Khingan and Yablonnovaya hills; the burning forest filled the air with that nauseating odour with which the destruction of squitch is connected, and when we reached the fire itself there was little flame to be seen, nothing like a general conflagration, but a wide stretch of woodland deprived of its undergrowth and the bared tree trunks blackened from ten to twenty feet above the ground. The trees, though their tops were still green, had doubtless been killed.

Between the settlements of Tsayagan and Novo-Vosskresensk, 860 versts from Stretensk, the Amur runs through a yellow sandstone, some of the cliffs rising to a height of 250 feet, and some forty feet from the surface is a shallow seam of lignite which is constantly burning. The fire near the edge of the cliff, fed by the river breeze into a flame, soon consumes the coal, and then the cliff above, deprived of its supports, falls and smothers the fire, which continues to smoulder until it again reaches the edge, where it will once more break out into flame.

To the visitor Siberia is slow to reveal herself. Mid-Siberia

THE BANKS OF THE LOWER AMUR

MIKHAILOVSKI-SIMEONOVSKI

is a land without a hill-top. Further east the traveller exchanges the dry ditch of the railway for the wet ditch of the waterway. The beauties of Siberia must be sought out like the big trees in the great forests; they are not apparent to the gaze. In verdure Siberia is rich, and the further east one goes the richer and more varied is the growth. Sandy steppes merge with forest, then the forest turns to glorious woodland, with bright green prairies and hill-slopes covered with hazel and wild vine. The grass is breast high in the meadows, gay with yellow poppies, orange lilies, and orchids — white and purple — in endless variety, whilst butterflies larger than humming birds and brighter hued, are plentiful as cabbage-moths in an English lane.

More interesting than the river and its banks are the ship and her company. A hundred and fifty people of different races and creeds, both sexes, and all ages from two-months-old babies to the grandmother of eighty years, all lie huddled together on less floor space than would be covered by their coffins. Add baggage of equal bulk; dogs large and small, cats, a tame hare, and a Mongolian sheep — the result is a company difficult to keep together for a week without quarrels and scenes. Yet, most surprising, good humour prevailed throughout; nothing in the nature of a fight occurred, there were no quarrels, the most animated discussions were upon quite abstract topics, and no one thought himself ill-treated or particularly favoured. The Chinese kept themselves apart, as they always do, but they bandied jokes with their neighbours and behaved as the others did. The whole community was made up of groups, the members of which though rallying to their centre for continuous interest, were companionable with all fellow-passengers in their immediate vicinity. The Little Russians conversed with Siberian adventurers; the wives of army officers and Siberian merchants exchanged courtesies,

they even admitted to their group a chorus girl from the garden theatre, and one of the unclassed. There was no possibility of isolation, little chance of privacy. The company had perforce to rub shoulders, and made no show of objecting to do so.

There was a crowd of children — that the traveller in Russia and Siberia may always expect to encounter. Probably in crossing from Moscow to Vladivostok by post, train, and steamer, he will at no time, by day or night, be out of earshot of children's laughter and wailing. They are neither quiet nor still; they play, scamper, jump, and tease each other and their parents as children always will. At many stations on the line, near the platform, is a children's playground with swings and giant's strides to which the juvenile passengers hurry for a short turn at every halt. Every item on shipboard was viewed by the children as a possible plaything; a stanchion was there to be climbed, a cross plank to be jumped over, a stay to toboggan down. There is as much life or mischief in the Russian boys and girls as is possessed by children from any country or colony; irrepressible describes them exactly.

For the sum of four shillings a day each, a number of us contracted with the captain to be boarded — we were to have the same as served to himself. We had what he had, and very rough fare it was. No cheap cook-shop in any town could serve anything so poor, and the fourpenny-halfpenny saloon in the Mile End Road would be a revelation of high culinary art to that shipmaster and his mates. We were served twice daily in batches of nine at a time, by one poor, harried, pock-fretted waitress who put the first samovar on the table at 5 A.M. and, always heavily laden, threaded her way silently in and out among the crowd on both decks all hours of the day until she removed the last samovar about midnight. Nothing ruffled her temper, or provoked a smile.

She was stewardess, pantry-maid, laundry-woman, and general drudge at fifteen roubles a month, and slept sitting upright on a pantry shelf.

The cook was old, and big, and muscular. She went bare-footed and bare-armed, and always in a hurry as a woman must be who has to cook several three-course dinners for many people daily. She received forty roubles a month, and whatever else she extorted from the passengers who crowded her stove at all times with pots, pans, and kettles of every size — few who dined at the captain's table had the courage to peep into her galley.

As the little steamer made its rapid progress down the great river, the company of passengers stood or sat gazing out into the haze, smoking, sleeping, panting, stewing; lulled by the splashing paddle-blades and the rhythmical wheezing of the engine. In the bows one of the two Russian deck-hands was sounding the depth with a nine-foot pole, and as the vessel neared the shallows those nearest the taffrail would look over and see the bright pebbled bed, or look ahead, where the rippling water broke over a scarcely submerged boulder. The depth was called in feet. "Four! Four-and-half! Four! Three-and-half!" "Half-speed" is shouted down to the engine-room; "Three! Two-and-half!" "Slowly ahead!" is then the order; then again "Three!" "Three-and-half!" and the immediate danger is over, to recur in may be a few minutes, perhaps not for hours. Or suddenly the engines stop; there is a sound as of scrunching bones in a power-mill, or the fall of rock from a quarry face after a big blast, the boat lurches heavily to one side and swings a quarter round, then the wave borne on by the current lifts her a few inches, the racing of the water and pebbles under the bilges is heard, and still rolling heavily she tumbles into deep water again and floats down stream.

That is not the way of the mail-packet. On this everything is done according to regulation. The upper deck, clean and spacious, is reserved for saloon passengers; the peasants, immigrants, and pedling adventurers travel on a steel barge towed a cable's length astern. The captain has learned seamanship on salt water: risks he is neither prepared nor paid to take. Is the weather hazy, he drops anchor; the twilight that precedes dusk is sufficient indication of coming darkness to warrant the same safe action. He understands his business. There is a feeling of relief at being in such cautious hands. There is room; there is comfort. On a deck chair, under the shade of an awning, with the river breeze fanning the cheeks, a novel to read, a cup of coffee to sip, ice in the locker, and cigars at the buffet, it is civilisation once more. From the bridge one hears music; the accordeon, the melodeon, the harp and violin, then after a lull the strident brass of a German band. All the musicians are on their way to Manchuria; there, fortunes await all. Meanwhile, what better than a dance? After supper, the band is brought on board, the deck is cleared, dancing begins and lasts long into the night. The next day this easy life ends; there are shallows. The ship crosses to the opposite bank. Another ship ought to be there to meet us. It is not. Possibly the river is too low for her to reach so far. She may, but she may not, be awaiting our arrival at the other end of the rapids. However that may be, this mail-boat must return. At midday our baggage is transferred to the barge; we betake ourselves to that inferno. The captain comes with us; we swing out into midstream, and are then cast off; the captain too leaves us, we float almost helplessly down stream.

It is unbearably hot. The only shade is that improvised by the passengers with the help of their bedding and green-leaved branches torn from the trees on the river banks. In the hold,

IMMIGRANTS ON AN AMUR BARGE

THE RIVER-SIDE, MANCHURIA

where Chinese, Japs, and Russians lie panting, the thermometer registers 148° F. at 2 o'clock, and in nine feet of water we float down stern first and dragging our anchor, for in that way only can these ferry-boat sailors steer. Life on a Government barge is far more uncomfortable than a passage on a crowded private steamer. The children suffer most. On one barge which grounded last year west of Blagoveshchensk, the infant mortality was four a day — and even gypsies died of heat apoplexy.

Once more fortune favoured me. A mail-steamer was reached, and took the barge in tow. The saloon passengers were transferred to the steamer, but there the accommodation was inferior to that the other mail-steamer possessed. For more than a month this packet had been plying to and fro in a pool between Radde and Mikhailovski-Simeonovski. Supplies had not been sent her; she had no ice, no wines or mineral waters, and very few provisions other than the fish, meat, and brown bread to be purchased at the settlements. Her cabin accommodation was poor, and the whole of the second-class saloon had to be given up to the women and children. Bad as it was, the next day we were expected to change to another mail-steamer which had no saloon accommodation at all.

Then happened one of the most interesting incidents of the journey. The saloon passengers objected to transfer themselves and their baggage to the smaller steamer. They asked the captain to continue the journey down stream to Khabarovsk. He pleaded the orders to the contrary received from the other ship. The vessels stopped, were made fast to each other, and the barge brought alongside, and its tow-line transferred to the other ship. Still the passengers did not stir, and the captains had an angry altercation on their respective paddle-boxes, each man strongly supported in his

arguments by his passengers — those going up stream wished to change to the better steamer. When it was decided by the captain that if the exchange could not be effected, those going up stream should at least have the opportunity of going by our steamer, and we passengers back with them if we declined to get off, we all locked our cabins and the saloons, put the keys in our pockets and stayed on deck. Then, for a time, the effort to take possession of the steamer was delayed, the anchors were got up and the two mail-boats and the barge all went to the nearest Cossack post.

To me one steamer was as good as another, and I mentioned the fact to Nikanor, the official of our small company. He was indignant; all the Russian passengers took the matter very seriously. Now, if any one were to show signs of wavering, he would be pummelled by the company into agreeing with the majority, or pitched into the river. We must carry our point or the consequences might be serious for the leaders of the revolt against authority, if not for all. All the same the militant party hedged before reaching the Cossack post. If the captain would wire to Khabarovsk explaining the situation, we consented to abide by whatever instructions were received. So at Mikhailovski-Simeonovski the Hetman of the Cossacks was not called upon to interfere immediately, and a Colonel of Cossacks travelling on the steamer supported the other passengers in their refusal to move, so really none feared any interference by military force.

The next morning the answer was telegraphed from Khabarovsk. The authorities there did not intend to decide an issue so momentous, and merely instructed the captains to wire instead to Blagoveshchensk. The same day the answer came "if the passengers declined to leave it would be necessary to take them on." So we carried our point;

and steamed away with the cheers of the passengers from the other steamer and of the people ringing in our ears.

There was a sequel. Further down the river the barges were left; and the passengers transferred to the deck of the steamer towing them. But those on the barge we had in tow had learned a lesson. They refused to leave the barge at all. Said their spokesman, "If first and second class passengers have rights so have we. Why should we crowd on to the deck of your steamer for a few hours, when we are settled comfortably here, where we have been for a week? We won't get off. Take us down to Khabarovsk."

The captain turned to us, "There, you see what your example has done! What am I to do now?"

First and second class passengers were not ashamed, nor were they anxious to have the deck crowded with a hundred and fifty passengers of the roughest class. Even the Colonel of Cossacks thought the immigrants were right to object to change. "Why not take the barge down to Khabarovsk?" These were only third-class passengers, but they carried their point even as we had succeeded in doing, and the lesson, one of many learned during their long journey across Siberia, will serve again whenever, as is certain, they come into contact with officialdom.

CHAPTER XII

THE OPEN MARKET

THE Siberian railways running through an unexploited region, it is assumed that the commercial intercourse between Western Europe and Russian Asia will increase, and trade result. Undoubtedly the facilities for communication have been improved, and thus means afforded for developing the country. Unfortunately, up to the present little real business has resulted. The glowing pictures of trade prospects seem impossible of realisation with prevailing conditions, and for many years to come Siberia is not likely to rank as an important market for general foreign trade.

There is a small population, only as 2.1 is to 215.3 to the same area in the United Kingdom; it is a poor population; trade is restricted. The import tariff is high, and it is a differential tariff as against certain countries. In any and every detail it is subject to immediate alteration, and, further, the increased duties have been made retrospective. Siberian merchants have assured me that not only have they had to pay duty at a higher rate on goods imported before the notification of the increased duty was issued, but they have also had to pay it on goods cleared, received, sold, and delivered before such change was made.

It is the policy of the Russian Government to encourage home industries, to nurse those recently founded and protect those well established, by imposing high duties on all im-

ported goods which compete. The tariff is not for revenue purposes, but for the protection of Russian manufacturers. This policy may be wrong; the whole fiscal policy of the empire may be at fault, as some well-informed financial critics contend stoutly that it is, but the result is the same so far as foreign manufacturers are concerned. Improved methods of manufacture and reduced cost of production will not enable them to secure the bulk of the Russian trade, for by just so much as they cheapen their goods will the duties be increased. To gain the Russian market and hold it successfully, they must do as some German and English manufacturers have already done, and convert the raw produce into manufactured goods within the Russian Empire.

Certain articles are not as yet made in Russia, and these have some sale there, but as the demand increases with an increased knowledge of the articles supplied, so does the production of these goods increase in Russia. Goods of a particular make secure a sale, but probably no country is so generally flooded with spurious imitations of the products of renowned foreign manufacturers. There is a possibility that the demand may exceed the supply available from Russian industrial centres, but here, again, the demand will be temporary only, and every endeavour will be made to supply it with home-made products. In a word, Russia has been a market; it is a market which Europe is losing, just as it has lost that of the United States of America, and neither technical education nor commercial enterprise will enable England to regain it.

Russia-in-Asia is regarded as a properly protected reserve for goods produced in Poland and European Russia. The manufacturers there have influence which they exerted in order to close Vladivostok as a free port, to prevent over-sea trade by the Arctic Ocean route to Siberia, and in other ways to secure Russian Asia as their exclusive market. They

regard Mongolia and Manchuria as solely their own, and Dalny, if started as a free port, either in order to encourage its growth or to ruin the trade of the Chinese treaty-port of Newchwang, will just as surely be closed to foreign imports whenever Russian manufacturers deem that action to be necessary to their own welfare. One of the most recent acts of the Government is to impose a duty of 1*s.* 9*d.* a pound on Chinese tea borne by sea to Siberian ports, whilst admitting it free if brought overland to Irkutsk.

The official returns of the exports and imports do not disclose the real importance of Russia as a market, but, as evidencing change, the returns may be given for two dates.

Imports from the United Kingdom: 1888, £7,677,796; 1900, £15,941,496.

Exports to the United Kingdom: 1888, £26,315,213; 1900, £22,283,952.[1]

On the other hand, it must be admitted that the Russian Government is mindful of the needs of Siberia so far as to admit free of all duties at the present time, such machinery as may be necessary to exploit the natural resources of the country. There is, therefore, an immediate demand for machines, implements, and tools of foreign manufacture, such as: Harvesters, reaping and threshing machines; grain milling machinery; gold, coal, and iron mining machinery; the requisites for saw-mills, brick-fields, salt-works, and the tools used in dairies, tanneries, and rope works. The market is not likely to be permanent for even these goods, but advantage may be taken of the present demand, and those wise and enterprising enough to engage at once in supplying the needs of the Siberian settlers will have no reason to be dissatisfied with their venture, but they must not expect a permanent market.

[1] As regards general trade, Russia's imports in 1900 show a decrease of about 4 per cent. on 1899, whilst the exports show an increase of about 14 per cent.

SETTLED COUNTRY IN WEST SIBERIA

The object of the State is to attract capital rather than to create a market in Asia for foreign manufactured goods. Now and for some years to come foreigners bold enough to risk manufacturing in Siberia will receive reasonable facilities and be welcomed by the authorities. In Central Siberia iron could be manufactured profitably for immediate local requirements. Saw-mills are needed, but lumbering would not be profitable unless the production of wood pulp were also undertaken — in the two combined with paper making, there is a fortune.

Developing the trade of Siberia is understood to be finding a remunerative market for the country's produce. Siberia is to be a seller abroad, not a buyer from the foreigner. The railways constructed and proposed are directed towards the attainment of this object. Farm produce, grain, fish, and game are to be forwarded and put upon the London market; the return trains will be loaded with Russian-made manufactured goods. Every facility is given to the foreign buyer. The commerical travellers from abroad who wish to sell are not as liberally treated. In fact they are not wanted; they may not trade, must pay a special tax — about three guineas — observe various regulations, and be provided with special permits and an official licence.

The Siberian merchant differs but little from the Moscow trader; he is equally intelligent, energetic, and trustworthy. His capital is larger than that of the merchants in Russian provincial towns, and he is more enterprising and possesses greater independence of character. He is a good buyer, but an indifferent salesman. He wants the lowest-priced goods; is not versed in the small differences of quality, and offers his wares to people who wish to buy and seek him out. He will not pay cash if he can obtain credit; the trade terms are from three months to a year — he sells for cash, but is not a believer in small profits and a large turnover. Prices are invariably

high, the lowest qualities of foreign-made goods being especially dear; for instance, common envelopes purchasable anywhere in Germany at two shillings a thousand are usually sold in Vladivostok at twenty shillings.

The merchant who goes to Siberia finds the ground fully occupied. American and German firms started general stores with branches in all large centres of the Eastern provinces more than a quarter of a century ago. They keep fashionable goods of Russian and foreign origin, sell at fixed prices, rarely give credit, do a profitable business, and make successful competition difficult. Russian companies have followed the same plan, and several are doing an immense trade, but the German firm with its twenty branches in Siberia and Manchuria has still the bulk of the business.

The ordinary Russian shopkeeper has, year by year, fewer opportunities to make his business partake of the character of these large departmental stores. Those who have technical knowledge, and supply special instead of general goods, rarely fail to make large profits.

Foreign trading firms are now heavily handicapped. They must have special permission to carry on business; usually they must deposit a large sum in the State bank as guarantee. They must take out the local guild licences, costing £25 or £50 a year, and pay annual taxes for each clerk, traveller, and assistant they employ.

Working from the Pacific side the American firms have established themselves thoroughly. Messrs. Emery commenced on the Amur in 1870 as general traders and transport agents, owning river steamers and opening retail stores in Khabarovsk, Blagoveshchensk, and elsewhere. Later the American Trading Company appeared, and has wholesale depots at Vladivostok and Tomsk. It is probable that these two firms will unite and so monopolise the market.

Great Britain has neither consulates nor commercial agencies, not, except at Pacific ports, even trading firms. Little, therefore, is actually known of the possibilities of the country as a market for British goods, since the foreigners who deal in English manufactures are unlikely either to favour British industries, or to make public the character and value of their business. Already the trade lost to Great Britain owing to its dilatoriness in being officially represented in Siberia must amount to over a million sterling. For instance, much of the material furnished indirectly to the Siberian railways might have been purchased in England; the launches and material for the Circum-Baikal line and the Mongolian railways under construction could, and in all probability would, have been furnished by English manufacturers had they been advised that goods were wanted; whilst the tariff war of 1901 between Russia and the United States of America afforded an unexpected and unusual opportunity for introducing Canadian and Australian produce. The trade which might have been attracted to British firms was diverted to German channels because Great Britain had no official representative on the spot, whereas all competing nations were adequately represented.

The British manufacturer is too often blamed for lack of enterprise; he is said not to possess business aptitude and to show no adaptability to the changing conditions of foreign markets. The fault is not his; he does remarkably well in difficult circumstances, heavily handicapped as he is by the obsolete fiscal policy of his Government. So there are plenty of English-made goods still sold in Siberia and Manchuria. Birmingham, Manchester, Wolverhampton, and Newcastle-on-Tyne continue to supply some of the staple manufactures, though the channels by which the goods reach the retailers may be tortuous and hidden. The British export merchant objects to manufacturers placing names on the goods they

factor — the object being to prevent the retailer and producer getting into direct communication. The Americans have no such scruples, as most of the articles made proclaim their origin to all who can read, whilst English goods are passed unrecognised by the casual observer. The exceptions most general, were: Birmingham bedsteads and hollow-ware; Wolverhampton corrugated iron, and steel toys; and such complete manufactured articles as machinery, tools, steamship fittings, implements, instruments, filters, and domestic appliances. Still the proportion of British-made wares to other foreign goods is small, but to increase the sales it will not be sufficient merely to travel the country with samples.

Apparently there is but one way which promises even partial success. Merchants or manufacturers, the latter preferably, should combine and establish a central depot in Siberia, sending out therefrom trustworthy agents to sell the goods at such prices as the market permits. It is next to impossible to trade in goods which are not at hand for immediate delivery, and customers prefer to take what they can get and pay a much higher price for that, than order what they really want and wait for it to be made or imported. Consequently the successful Siberian shopkeepers carry immense stocks, they are practically independent of railway transport, and import the season's stock at one time. The stores are far larger, and some are much better stocked, than those of large provincial towns in the United Kingdom. At present, Irkutsk is the best town in which to make a start. There is less competition there; it is an admirable centre; important railway constructing works are in progress in that region, and it has the trade of the gold-fields of the Lena valley, the steppe farms of Mongolia, and the land route into China. A general retail store and wholesale warehouse for British and other goods would be successful if founded

immediately under competent management, and with sufficient capital to trade for twelve months.

The salesman does not find life easy in Siberia. The hours are long, the customers exacting, and distractions few. Most stores open at eight in the morning, some close for one hour midday, and business ceases at six or seven in the evening. Store-breaking is a very common crime, pilfering is general, and the responsible manager runs many risks.

Buyers, especially people of official rank, show no consideration for the trading class, and in the best stores it is not unusual to hear strong altercations between the unsatisfied army officer and the unfortunate shopman; in fact, the manners of the open market are imported into the store rooms or counting-house: there is haggling as to prices, depreciatory remarks as to quality, and sometimes insinuations as to the vendor's lack of commercial probity. It is much to the credit of the larger establishments that they have as far as possible adhered to the better manners of the West in retailing.

The pioneers in the reform were severely handled. It is contrary to army regulations for an officer to strike a civilian, but when the officer has the worst of the dispute, and is proved to be in the wrong, when he carries weapons, and there is no superior to him in rank present, St. Petersburg seems a long way off and most quarrels are settled immediately. An American who was struck whilst upholding his rights took the right course: he neither struck back nor allowed his assistants to do so; instead he made a formal complaint to the Governor-General, and threatened to put the matter into the hands of the American Consul unless immediate notice was taken of his complaint. St. Petersburg was four thousand miles away, but the offender was reached from the capital, and at once tendered apologies, protestations, excuses, and offers of indemnification;

the matter was prosecuted until the full penalty was exacted and the officer dismissed the service, since when the lot of the Siberian shopkeepers has been more tolerable. Quarrels are of frequent occurrence, but are not general; often bargaining is a mere distraction from the monotony of the daily routine in isolated towns; some officers never forget themselves, whilst others — well, army officers are not appointed to commands in Siberia because of excellent manners and good breeding, which, however necessary to preferment in St. Petersburg, are qualities not indispensable to success in the far north and east.

The foreigner with a general knowledge of business need not expect a living, much less a fortune, from Siberia. His services are not desired. As in Russia, men with practical experience of certain manufacturing industries are in demand, and, whether Russian or foreign, can obtain high wages. It is not easy for them to acquire a fortune, so hemmed around with restrictions is every foreigner who attempts to do business for himself. Nor may a foreigner be employed in any Government position. When a foreigner is indispensable, as he not infrequently is found to be, a place is made for him by constituting him an advisory committee; or the job is let out to a Russian subject who is free to employ him on Government work.

For Western Europeans Siberia provides no outlet. Men who can erect and maintain machinery of special character may accept any reasonable offer that may be made to them. The wages will be higher than is obtainable in England or America, and the work will be light. If the engagement is for a long term they may "drop out" from employment at home altogether, and be forced to remain in Russia, or elsewhere in the Far East, until they have earned, not a fortune, but a modest sum which will suffice to keep them from absolute want. As conditions now are in Great Britain, the first-class

THE MARKET, BLAGOVESHCHENSK

mechanic may do better in Siberia than at home if he has a long engagement to steady him during the term he must serve an apprenticeship to the ways of a Government so different from that of England, but he must not expect to find the East golden. It is only gilt, but, at best, the gilding is thick enough to satisfy the majority of mortals.

At present the British and American settlers are so few that the individuals are practically isolated, and consequently are oppressed by the loneliness of their situation. The Englishmen settled in Siberia can be counted on the fingers of one hand; there are some at the English works in north-west, and Ekaterinburg and Tiumen are sufficiently close for English settlers there to show neighbourliness, being only twelve hours distant by rail. Others are four days' journey or more apart. There is a Scotchman at Tomsk, a Yorkshireman at Krasnoyarsk, Irkutsk has recently had an addition, an English subject born in Russia, and there is an English engineer on Lake Baikal. Eight days further east there is another, at Blagoveshchensk. His nearest British neighbour resides near Vladivostok, a week by river and rail, but there is one American stationed at Khabarovsk, only four days' sail down stream, and another American at Nikolaievsk, about the same distance beyond. There is also an Englishman on the Island of Sakhalin, and at least two in south Siberia (Turkestan) on the Trans-Caspian route. All these men lead hard, dull, earnest lives like those of the trade pioneers in the Chinese back lands, but unlike them have not their dreary sojourn in a strange land brightened by frequent intercourse with missionaries, or the passing of consular agents. Do these men feel their isolation? Undoubtedly they do, especially those who have not been brought up in Russia; those who feel they hold nothing in common with their neighbours, and whose longings are always for home and the companionship of people of their own race

and class. Although unusually free their lot is less endurable than that of the Russian political exiles, and even that of many criminals. Only those of strong character are able to live on year after year and do the work their employers expect.

Another type of pioneer deserves mention. The English governess, to whom is due much of the friendly feeling the better educated class of Russians evince for England, has already penetrated Siberia. The teachers of English are usually attracted by the high salaries offered, and most lead comfortable, uneventful lives, in which the isolation from kith, kin, and country is the most severe deprivation. There are others not so fortunate; women whose passports and salaries are withheld in order that they may not escape, and whose correspondence is tampered with so that help cannot reach them. Such instances are rare, and in order that they may not recur, all who accept situations far distant from the Russian capitals should maintain frequent communication with the nearest English consulate. There is also an increasing demand for English teachers in Eastern Siberia, a demand the curriculum of the Eastern Institute at Vladivostok is likely to increase. Although there are few openings for young Britons anxious to win large fortunes, Siberia can utilise the services of many more who are content to serve in humble capacities, and do not mind an easy life cut off from communications with their native land.

Of all foreigners the capitalist is most wanted in Siberia, or rather his capital is wished. Of all persons he is least likely to venture his money in exploiting the natural resources of the country with the prevailing conditions. As a foreigner he would not be allowed personally to exploit Crown property, and the regulations by which the working of private concessions is controlled are not such as confer sufficient security. The foreign company, or the Russian joint-stock company with

foreign capital, are both accorded facilities for operations denied to the foreign individual, but the professional company promoter has been effectually snubbed out. He has little better chance of obtaining a foothold in the Russian Empire than has the vendor of proprietary articles or patent medicines.

It will suffice to instance one case, that of the Siberian Goldfields Development Company, Limited, formed in London with a strong board of directors and £1,000,000 nominal capital to acquire and work the concessions of territory in the Nerchinsk province granted by the Crown to a Russian merchant named Pershin. The Russian Government not only refused to recognise the transfer of the concession, but Mr. S. Tatistchef, the London agent of the Russian Minister of Finance, wrote to the *Times* of January 8, 1901, that he was directed by M. de Witte "to declare that the Siberian Goldfields Development Company, Limited, has not only not received Imperial sanction in accordance with Russian law, but, further, that the Imperial Russian Government, while ever ready to favour reputable foreign commercial and industrial enterprises in Russia, will not authorise in any case the Siberian Goldfields Development Company, Limited, to operate within the limits of the Empire, seeing that this company, both in regard to its origin and composition and the action of its board, does not offer sufficient guarantee of its standing."

As a matter of fact, if the concessionaire had the right to transfer his interest in the lease, and the company complied with the regulations in force as to the formation of a foreign company, it is difficult to see what power, other than that of pure arbitrary right, the Imperial Government had to prevent this company working. If the arrangements between a company and its brokers or agents abroad are to be approved by the Russian Government in each case, it is unlikely that foreign company promoters will seek concessions or properties in

Russia as long as there are other fields open for their activities. In this instance the company tried to acquire other properties in the Nerchinsk, the Okhotsk, the Bodobinski, and other mining districts of Siberia without success, and at last went into voluntary liquidation.

This official communication of Mr. S. Tatistchef has been severely criticised on two distinct grounds. First, from the language used, it might be implied than an authorisation to a foreign company signifies the approval of the Imperial Russian Government of its reputable constitution and its object — something more than a mere statutory declaration that the usual formalities had been complied with, which really is all that authorisation means. Others contend that in any case the interference was a mistake; that it directed public attention to the arbitrary action of the Russian State in respect to private undertakings, and so was instrumental in preventing investors subscribing to companies having Siberia as their field: even, that it was the death knell of the foreign companies. It was followed by another blunder, for the Russian Government ultimately gave way in so far as it ratified the Pershin concession and allowed its transference to the English company, providing, that at a general meeting of the shareholders it was stated that the Russian Government did not recommend the property as an investment. The promoters benefited, as it strengthened their position legally and enabled the directors to call up the unpaid capital; and, as is usually the case, the unfortunate shareholders are the principal losers.

Certainly this instance has stayed company promotion in England with reference to properties in Russia and Siberia, though the conditions themselves are sufficiently onerous to deter most general investors.

Briefly capitulated the following are the regulations affecting joint-stock companies operating in Russia: they must pay

a variable tax on the profits — when the profits are less than 3 per cent. there is to be no charge in this respect — and a tax of 0.0015 per cent. per annum on the paid-up share capital; they must file proper detailed accounts, balance sheets and reports; they may not amalgamate with any other company, or in any way modify the constitution of the company, without the previous consent of the Government, and they must have in Russia a nominee possessed of a full power of attorney permitting him to deal with the property of the company. Sugar and alcohol may not be made, and insurance and banking business can be undertaken only when special circumstances warrant the granting of such permission, and then a heavy deposit is exacted as security. As a foreigner may not acquire real estate in Russia, neither can a foreign company, so, although in practice this is evaded for practical working purposes by appointing a Russian as trustee for the company, there is really no tangible security to offer shareholders as guarantee for their investment, and without this the general investor is unlikely to respond liberally.

Shares in Russian companies may be acquired and held by foreigners, but during the past two years there has been a general and uniform "slump" in the market price of all Russian securities, particularly industrial undertakings. Commercial depression is in some measure the cause of this decline in values, whilst critics attribute it largely to the fiscal policy of M. de Witte, the Minister of Finance, whose economics, it must be remembered, are in part imposed by political circumstances — the successful reprisals and intrigues of the political party opposing him.

A share in the profitable exploitation of Russia and Siberia may be secured in either one of two ways. The first is the formation of private companies by joint venturers having sufficient confidence in the actual manager to trust him with their

money implicitly, and with such insufficient guarantees of security as may be forthcoming. The risks are considerable, but if the property be properly chosen, cheaply acquired, and efficiently worked, the profits will be commensurate with the risk and a large return obtainable. This method is applicable to mining for gold, silver, and base minerals on private domains, and for various industrial and commercial enterprises. The second, better adapted for trading purposes, is to form an English company to trade in the East generally, and establish branches in Manchuria, Mongolia, and Siberia, the Siberian depots conforming with all the statutory requirements, and the resident manager being the local trustee for the property of the company. In this way, by joining the first guild of merchants, taking out subsidiary licences in different provinces, and making a substantial deposit of interest-bearing bonds with the State Bank as a guarantee, the general working expenses could be so reduced that the business done would show a large profit on the capital actually employed. Still easier would it be for the large corporations trading in the Far East to open branches in these districts, where it is essential Great Britain should maintain an open market for her manufactures.

What foreigners need most is trustworthy information from non-Russian sources. Non-Russian, because recently a foreign correspondent in Russia was peremptorily ordered by a Russian department to alter the tone of his contributions to his paper, and not many months before a Minister had officially resented the language of the harmless, necessary Consular report.

In whichever way the foreigner attempts to trade in Russia and her eastern territories, he must forget the existence of the Secret Commissions Act — it does not apply to this open market. Bribery, if such open transactions as are the rule can be so termed, prevails in every class of business, whether

between officials and traders or private individuals; it is the grease which makes the wheels of trade run smoothly, and he who knows how, when, and where to apply it to advantage is accounted the best business man, and as such is respected. It is the Russian, the eastern way, and probably is not more expensive than the British, for though certainly if you wish to open a liquor saloon or put down a train in, say, Vladivostok or Irkutsk, you may have to purchase the privilege in some way from some one, the cost will not be so great as the charges on account of preliminary legal expenses for the same right in England.

CHAPTER XIII

EAST OF BAIKAL

LIKE the whole of Gaul, Greater Russia may be divided into three parts, of which the most interesting is that east of Baikal.

The great fresh-water lake seems to be to the Russian Empire what the Suez Canal is to Britain — the line that divides the older country from its greater part. East of Baikal there are other customs, different ideals, and wilder methods than obtain in Russia. The country is too far from the capital to be effectually controlled; the long line of communication sags; the distant provinces run on a loose rein. When the Trans-Asian lines are completed, and the overland route to the Far East more generally travelled than it is at present, much that is now interesting to the traveller will vanish, and suitable accommodation for tourists be provided in place of the characteristic Siberian inns and the Mongolian caravanserais.

The country east of Baikal which is under Russian dominion is most alluring to those who travel for the pleasure travelling brings. People who do not mind things as they are, who are prepared to rough it, and, whilst taking whatever sport offers, have neither fishing nor shooting as the chief object of their journey, can find no better land than that east of Baikal. On the rail, post, and river routes there is just enough of the unexpected to make the journey mildly exciting; off the beaten track there is the added spice of danger from brigands, out-

MARKET PLACE, NIKOLSKOE

WHITE RUSSIAN IMMIGRANTS

laws, and savage animals to satisfy the adventurous. That is to say, there is sufficient evidence of risk to quicken the apprehension of disaster, but very little real danger for those who take ordinary precautions to ensure safety.

More than any part of the Russian Empire, it is swayed by American and English influence — not directly, but such as received when flavoured by that unmistakable, but not officially recognised, Anglo-Saxon empire of the Far East. The ports are unlike Russian ports on the Baltic and Black Seas; the people are more cosmopolitan, more enterprising, more keenly alive to a world outside the Russian Empire. Japan is the "Black Terror" of the Eastern Siberian. St. Petersburg he is bound to recognise and admit supreme; but after his own Government what interests him is the English and American view. What is thought and done in Shanghai? London is of lesser moment. By America, California is meant — it is San Francisco rather than New York that appeals to the Siberian trader.

From the ports, by way of the Amur, the Siberian merchants reach their great market, get into touch with the new arrivals from the west, and instil fresh ideas, different aspirations, and introduce new customs, point out fresh wants, and supply all needs. The foreign import trade was attaining such overwhelming proportions that the Russian Government for the past three years has been making special endeavours to check it — to divert the natural channels of supply towards the native Russian sources. In short, Eastern Siberia, owing to its contact with the Far East and extreme west, was slipping quite out of Russian control. The subsidised Volunteer Fleet, the Siberian railway, the highway on the river-side, and improved circumstances generally, are expected, if not to effect a change of themselves, at least to afford a means for doing so. But events follow too closely upon each other for the State departments to make those formal dispositions they believe to be so

necessary to the real welfare of the orthodox settlers and the Russian State.

The overland railway journey to Eastern Siberia takes the immigrant at least twice as long as it does the ordinary traveller; the greater part of the time he is waiting on a siding. From Smolensk to Baikal in a month is good travelling. He has to await a Government barge or steamer, and from that he, with all his belongings, may be put ashore wherever the depth of water may require that the ship be lightened. An emigrant camp on the banks of the Amur had been formed in that way; the passengers had been there fifteen days when I spoke with them. They expected to remain another fortnight, and it is possible that they are there still. Unless a Government boat with spare accommodation happens to take them on, they have only two things to do — become squatters at that spot, or construct a raft and float down stream to their destination or an immigrant station. This last is the easiest solution; it requires only the men. Away down the Amur I passed a small raft constructed of a few baulks of driftwood bound together with withes. The oars were sticks, to which, for blades, the staves of an old cask were tied; other staves made the floor; in an old soap box was tea, bread, and salt; in the lid of an old tin box the embers of the fire were kept aglow. Two men had come on this rough craft 800 miles, and had 1100 more to travel. Typical Russian peasants, they were able to endure the hardships of their journey; they declared they enjoyed it, and lacked nothing.

The latest official report estimates the number of settlers in the Amur province at 50,000, and finds agriculture so improved that there is surplus corn available for exportation to neighbouring provinces. From an earlier report it seems that the territory has no longer lands in the fertile belt upon which to establish agricultural settlements, but only enough for a few farms of

from eight to twenty acres a man, near Cossack posts. The actual area of the three Governments is immense: 393,366 square versts in the Trans-Baikal; 347,965 in the Amur district; whilst the extent of the Maritime province is estimated at more than 33,000 square geographical miles (leagues), the length from north to south being 2750 miles.

The Russians under Skorokhodov arrived in the country east of Baikal in 1644, when in quest of fur-bearing animals, or rather of native tribes of fur hunters from whom they could levy "yasak," or tribute, payable in pelts. Dauria, as the region was called, was occupied by Daurs, Mongols, and Tungus; a little further to the south-east is the Onon valley, the birthplace of the famous Tartar leader Chinghis Khan, who overran Asia and European Russia in the thirteenth century. His Mongol kingdom extended over the Hai-lung-chang province of Manchuria. Yenisei Cossacks had a stockaded port on the Upper Angara as long ago as 1647, the colonisation of the territories began at that time, and free immigration has since continued with little interruption. Nerchinsk dates from 1658; the first monasteries and proselytism by the Orthodox Church in the Far East from 1881. Arakum, the famous Raskolnik, was one of the first arrivals exiled for religious opinions. Cossacks, respited political revolutionists, and criminals guilty of capital crimes were exiled to Dauria. The frontier was fixed by treaty with the Chinese in 1727 and the boundary marked; thus establishing the Kiakhta trade route with China.

The Amur province was entered by the Russians about the same time, but they obtained no permanent foothold in the territory. Yerofei Khabarov went down the Amur in 1649; destroying Daurian villages, to conquer the country. The help of the Chinese was sought by the natives, and in 1689, by the treaty of Nerchinsk, the Russians evacuated the posts taken.

On the discovery of the mouth of the Amur by Admiral Nevelskoi in 1849, the struggle for the river recommenced, and in 1854, Governor-General Muraviev, "Amurski," navigated the Amur, and from this time the colonisation of the north bank began in real earnest, but by the treaty of Aigun in 1857, the Russians admitted the supremacy of the Chinese on the south bank. Previous to this it had been discovered that the natives, Giliaks, at the mouth of the Ussuri, did not acknowledge the Chinese, so the whole of the territory between the Ussuri and Suifun to the Pacific was annexed by Russia and the act ratified by the treaty of Aigun. Military colonists, religious and political exiles, criminals, and some voluntary settlers were drafted into the country. At present the peasant contingent consists very largely of sectarian dissenters; Molokans and Bezpopovtsi, who have no ordained priests, and the Semeiski, or "Old Believers," who migrated with their families when the individual was sentenced to banishment. The early settlers on the Amur endured great hardships and suffered from floods and pestilence: according to Kriukov the mortality was as great as in time of war.

Excluding the northern arctic territory, there is in the provinces beyond Baikal better land than in Siberia, a land where there is larger timber, a greater variety of flora and fauna, a country well wooded, well watered, rich in minerals, and capable of being converted into a highly productive region supporting a large population, and accreting immense wealth. The topography is that to which the Russian is not accustomed. It is a hilly region; in many places there is an outcrop of bare rock, roads are not easily constructed, and peasant settlers from the plains of Russia do not know how to make the best of such land as is allotted them.

The mineral wealth is acknowledged, the forest wealth is apparent — neither is fully exploited. Too much energy is

A RAILWAY PLATFORM IN TRANS-BAIKALIA

devoted towards occupying the agricultural land: insufficient inducements are offered to work the other natural resources. The luxuriant vegetation of the Amur and Ussuri riparian settlements deters the farmer, but it is very beautiful, especially when contrasted with the *taiga* of Siberia. Oak and elm, walnut and cork, black birch and willow, lime and maple, Siberian "cedar" and wild apple intermingle with the silver birch and fir trees. In their shade flowering shrubs grow luxuriantly with masses of red (*Sepedeza bicolor*), blue (*Vicia pseudorobus* and *Metalepsis Stauntonii*), and white (*Baotia discolor* and *Sanguis orbateri*) blossoms. Lilies are common, and the grass so thickly studded with herbaceous plants that it makes indifferent if not bad fodder —but the scarlet, white, purple, and yellow blossoms of the wild land make a scene as rare and beautiful as that of the edelweiss smothered slopes of the Khingan.

For many years to come the hilly districts of the territories will remain unpeopled save by the wandering natives. It will be a country to visit; a land of great interest to the ethnologist; the botanist, naturalist, and sportsman will revel in the new fields the railway across Asia brings within their reach.

The Maritime provinces contain many native tribes, some, as the Maniakhirs, still unspoiled by contact with civilisation; frank, generous, kindly people. Elsewhere are remnants of aboriginal races, half-bred Mongols, the descendants of others, and some with quaint customs and curious traditions.

In the long ago the neighbourhood of Vladivostok was occupied by a distinct race, of unusual attainments towards civilisation. There was a mint near the town, the precious metals were mined, and good, paved roads, ninety feet broad, ditched on both sides, traversed the country, as the remains discovered demonstrate. Then the Chinese conquered this people, destroyed all the males, and carried the women into

captivity. A few of the latter escaped, and possibly some children. They mixed with a neighbouring people whose descendants at the present day form a distinct tribe, the Tozi, who are found near St. Olga's Bay.

Far away in the north the remnants of the once valiant Chukchis still hold together and practise such savage customs as rolling the new-born babe in snow to harden it. The mortality is great, the hardship is greater than exposure on Mount Ida, and the result is the decrease of the race, for, as everywhere, it is the non-combative, unaggressive people who prove by their endurance that in the struggle of life they are the fittest to survive.

Among the Buriats the girls most sought after in marriage are those who have had several children, preferably by different fathers, as that is held to prove how highly esteemed they are by men. Their dress is elaborate, and on each side of the face there projects behind the ears wide, flat, worked-silver plates. They ride horseback in the male fashion, and make even better teamsters than the men. When past child-bearing the woman is shorn, but is no longer a wife, puts aside her ornaments, and spends most of her time in grinding out prayers in hand mills.

The Mongol Buriats do not bury their dead, but just drag the corpses outside the village limits, where they are devoured by dogs and vultures. The human bones are thick about the Buriat settlements and summer camps, and some of the commonest scenes are most disgusting both to Europeans and Chinese. Shamanists rather than Buddhists, though professing that religion or Christianity, they do not like to disturb the soil. As workers they prove best as teamsters, but they will saw logs and do surface work, though objecting to quarry stone.

The exiles in the far north-east who had received the education to fit them for the work, have made a close study of the native people with whom they have come in contact; and having made a close comparison of their physical peculiarities,

of their character and languages, have now substantial evidence that the American Indians and certain part-Mongol races have so much in common that both must have been derived from a common stock within historic times. The results of these researches into comparative ethnology are made known at local meetings of distant societies, some of the papers are published in the transactions of different institutes, but few, if any, are to be found in the libraries of Western Europe, or indeed of Russia.

Hunting is not only the chief pursuit of these people, it is, as with the American Indians, almost their religion too. Various rites are performed before engaging upon the work, and there are certain acts, particularly the actual taking of the game, which may not be witnessed by strangers, as is also forbidden by the inhabitants of Runo Island in the Baltic, by the natives of Patagonia, and others. The taking of fish is also a private affair with the Ostiaks. Then, when hunting large game, as bear, it is said that some tribes, having surrounded the animal, wait until the bravest man dashes from the circle and stabs the animal with a short knife, regaining the bear-baiters, if he can; then he, and others, repeat the deed, until the animal succumbs. Possibly this is done by some tribes only when sacrificing a bear, and not when capturing one for their own use. Amongst the Mongols, dogs not unlike the Pomeranian in appearance, but with stronger muzzles and immensely heavy sterns are used for bear-baiting, holding the hunted animal at bay whilst it is despatched by the hunters with spears or knives. The dogs are of two breeds, those in the north being white or piebald, in the south black or very dark brown. They are shy, good-tempered dogs, and are fed almost entirely upon fish.

Another breed of dog is raised, and trained solely to hunt the sable.

Game is plentiful throughout the various provinces of Eastern Siberia. Deer (*maral*) are on the heights between Blagoveshchensk and Khabarovsk, on both sides of the rivers in the Ussuri valley as far as Nikolsk. The elk is not found south of the Amur, and north towards Okhotsk are reindeer, musk-oxen, and the arctic fauna, Kamchatka being renowned for an indigenous variety of sheep (*Ovis poli*), so common that it serves the natives for food, being more easily taken than reindeer.

Roebuck in immense quantities are taken in the Ussuri district, and are found in other parts; like the *Ovis poli*, they serve settlers and natives for food, being the cheapest meat obtainable. Bear and lynx are both plentiful; only a season ago a bear was killed at Hilkovo — almost a suburb of Vladivostok — and not many years ago a Manchurian tiger was shot at Pervaya Rechka, quite within the present town limits. The lynx has not been seen of recent years within twenty miles of the town, but it is found in all the wooded districts. In different localities outside the Arctic Circle are found the brown and the cinnamon bear, elk, maral, reindeer, roebuck, hog-deer, wild goat, wolves, foxes, wild boar, and the small fur-bearing animals. Geese, blackcock, willow-grouse, partridges, ducks, and wild fowl in great quantities. In the south, where one finds the pheasant, the antelope also is indigenous, and in some places plentiful.

The Manchurian tiger, the royal Bengal tiger in a northern habitat, is too plentiful, and is poisoned with strychnine by the Chinese, but this spoils the pelt. There is great difficulty experienced in hunting the animal, as there are no elephants or shikaris. It is next to impossible to get within shot safely in summer, but in winter when the grass is down, the tracks are followed in the fresh snow, and each season two professional trappers of Nikolsk get four or five in this way. Its range

MAIN THOROUGHFARE, BLAGOVESHCHENSK

is from the far south to within a hundred and twenty miles of Nikolaievsk at the mouth of the Amur, thus practically over the whole of the Ussuri district as well as in Manchuria. It has not been found to the north of the Amur.

The common method of hunting is that of the "surround," as in Russia. In the autumn there will be several great drives organised by the army officers with several regiments as beaters. As many carry their rifles, and on sighting the game fire volleys, there is hardly sufficient sport to give the proceeding a name. There is a fish about 2 lbs. weight in clear streams which rises freely to a fly, but is not very game when hooked.

East of Baikal there is a larger urban population in comparison with agricultural settlers than there is in Siberia. There are also the military colonists, the forced labourers in the State works and mines, the free labourers at the mines, and a large floating population of coolies. Verkhne-Udinsk is a trading town, Chita and Stretensk are overgrown Cossack posts, Nerchinsk, Nerchinsk-Zavod, Petrovski Zavod, and some smaller towns, are purely urban mining districts, the chief free towns being Blagoveshchensk, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok.

Stretensk is a typical example of the old military *régime*. It is a Cossack post — an agglomeration of untidy wood houses around a square market place on the river side. No attempt has ever been made to construct a road; a building line is kept more or less roughly, and many of the houses have the gables in the street and are in their own enclosures. Mud, dirt, horse-dung, dilapidated shingle and wattle fences, mean houses, untidiness, and poverty predominate the town, as they do most Cossack settlements in the east. The stores are well stocked, but the buildings themselves low roofed, roughly constructed, shabby, and ill kept. The hotel is little better than a Siberian post station; the walls un-

papered, the rooms are just sparsely furnished lockers from a passage and make no pretensions to privacy. There are few gardens and not many cultivated patches. The Chinese market gardeners and petty merchants thrive exceedingly. The Cossacks make a fair living by raising horses — there are splendid troopers in Stretensk — and in part live upon the few traders to whom they lease land for dwellings, stores, and industrial purposes, the settlement having tanneries and tallow chandleries.

Blagoveshchensk is a town of another character. Primarily it is a trading centre. Its Amur frontage extends for miles, and it has another quay-side on the Zeya. It possesses the usual market square, but this quadrangle is surrounded with handsome substantial brick buildings, some commodious stores, and extensive public offices. The main streets are very wide, have a boulevard character, and the shops are numerous, clean, and well stocked. It is not a densely populated place, but a huge, straggling, prosperous village, mostly lacking inhabitants. Some of the houses are built in the eastern style. The verandah of the chief hotel is used just as that of Shepheard's famous rendezvous at Cairo. The boulevard, along the river front, is little used, only the market and the quays are thronged, and the promenade commands a view of the desolate Manchurian shore where the Chinese town of Sakhalian flourished three summers since. In Blagoveshchensk there was scarcely a Chinaman to be seen, but, it is said, they will return. Unless they do, the growth of Blagoveshchensk will be stayed and the town and its trade both decay. Of all the inland towns of Russia in Asia this is the one which has had the greatest opportunities, has most quickly progressed, and possesses theatre, telephone, museum, Russian, Japanese, and swimming baths, and most of the comforts of civilisation. Away from the river side the territory is bleak and uninteresting.

Khabarovsk, the seat of the Governor-General of the Russian Empire in the Far East, is typical of the military and official town under the new *régime*. It is built on the crest of three ridgeways which run from the river side, named the Artillery, Central, and Military hills. The Chinese who occupied the site were gradually squeezed out beyond the town limits, and now have their own quarters down stream. The population is about 10,000, exclusive of 5000 Chinese and Koreans, and save perhaps as a military centre, its importance is not likely to increase greatly. It is situated near the mouth of the Ussuri, and its propinquity to the Sungari renders it an important centre for the distribution of goods imported by way of the Amur. Its markets are resorted to by many natives, and a large trade is done with them by the Chinese merchants, but otherwise the town by reason of its uninhabited valleys, very wide, unpaved, unmade streets, and extensive barracks and Government buildings, seems desolate and stagnant.

Its situation is imposing, and the extensive gardens on the cliff at the river front of the Artillery Hill are among the best of many pleasing features in a town composed of attractive picturesque villas of quaint eastern architecture hidden amongst the trees of their own pleasure grounds. Of a thousand dwellings fifty at most are of brick, and these principally are Crown offices. The Governor-General's residence, the museum, theatre, military club, and schools are the most conspicuous buildings. The triumphal arch is unusually ugly and gimcrack, and must soon disappear. The Japanese, Chinese, and Korean towns in Siberia seem far more busy than this eastern capital of Khabarovsk, which "being the centre of all the administrative institutions answering the requirements of so vast a country, represents the centre of the intellectual forces contributing to develop spiritual and intellectual life in the East."

In the southern Ussuri district is the town of Nikolsk, or to

give its full title, Nikolskoe-Ussuri, representing the purely agricultural side of Eastern Siberian colonisation. It must not be confounded with the railway settlement which has sprung up round the line, where are the stores, engineering workshops, and terminal depot of the Eastern Chinese railway. The real agricultural village is about two miles distant on the river Suputenka. A few old ruins indicate earlier occupation, and according to tradition here was formerly the capital of the little Kingdom of Bokhai, which fell into the hands of the Manchus and was subsequently destroyed by Chinghis Khan's Tartars. In 1866 it was settled by nineteen families — a village community — from the Voronej government, and these suffered when the Russians turned the Chinese gold-seekers from the Askold Island, for, reaching the mainland, they attacked Nikolsk, and then the settlement was guarded with earthen ramparts which may still be seen.

The town is a huge straggling village on a level plain. As usual the smith's forges are on the outskirts, then come the timber stores and joinery works; in the centre is the market place, and near by the church. The purely agricultural portions of the population may be estimated at less than 10,000, having the right to cultivate about 60,000 acres of Crown land, on the fallow system. The railway population is probably not less than 6000, and the military element, which is partly agricultural, varies from 3000 to 6000, including the Cossacks, artillery, and several battalions of infantry which regard Nikolsk as their head-quarters.

Wide streets, small houses, bad sidewalks, and general untidiness characterise Nikolsk. The large retail merchants all have branch stores in the town, there are in addition about 100 Russian and 250 Chinese, Japanese, and Korean shops, yet from the Western standpoint the town is not thriving. The demand for agricultural produce exceeds the local supply, and

ON THE RUINS OF BOKHAI

THE "GOLDEN HORN," VLADIVOSTOK

the peasant farmers make no real attempt to increase the volume of their trade. When I was in Nikolsk, four shillings was asked for fourteen ounces of fresh butter; milk and eggs also were scarce, but the farmers, instead of increasing their stocks or providing a modern dairy, preferred to allow the milk they had to go sour so that they might live upon and sell the curds. They have had no success with their stock in the river bottoms, and are too listless to herd their sheep and cattle upon the neighbouring heights where deer thrive well and large flocks of sheep could be fed. Nikolsk convinced me of the comparative failure of Russian agricultural colonisation of the east: her colonists are content to see meat, grain, and farm produce imported, as long as they have enough for their own individual needs from the land they cultivate.

The chief town of the district, as it is really of the whole of Siberia east or west of Baikal, is the port of Vladivostok, which was first entered by the English man-of-war *Winchester* when searching for the Russian Pacific squadron in 1856. The "Golden Horn" of Peter the Great's Bay was named "Port May," and not occupied by the Russians until 1860. Vladivostok, "Sovereign of the East," settled by traders from Nikolaievsk, became a free port in 1865 and remained so until 1900. It has flourished exceedingly, being the chief naval base Russia possesses on the Pacific, and the largest commercial trading port. The town is situated in the slopes of half a dozen hills — a high ridge forming a tapering peninsula projecting into an irregular land-locked bay, the entrance to which is commanded by Russia Island and numerous islets. Most of the heights have been fortified: the lofty hills on the northwest protect the port from the land side, and in the deep-water creek of the "Golden Horn," four miles long and half a mile in width, ships are as safe from storms as they are from invaders by land or sea, and their enemy the winter ice is now mastered by a Danish ice-breaker.

Perhaps it is because of the lavish expenditure by the Government upon the port, the fortifications — which they believe to be impregnable — the naval fitting yard, arsenal, and coast defences, that the town has progressed so rapidly. Representing the greatest achievement of the Russians in Siberia, it will serve as an object study of some Russian methods. When the Government determined to make the port their chief base, they drove away the Chinese adventurers and Siberian exiles who were trying to win wealth in the district by surreptitious mining for gold and silver, and instead imported labour, materials, and provisions — imports they maintain. The exports are, and always have been unimportant; trepang, sea-cabbage, and an unappetising fungus which grows on rotting wood, &c., shipped to China. From China, Japan, Europe, and America come all the luxuries and most of the necessaries of life. It is a busy commercial centre, but trade is maintained artificially, and it is doubtful whether the preference being shown to Dalny (Talienwan) will not rob it of some of its present importance. Take away the military and naval establishments, then the town and port will sink to a small, dull village with Chinese and Koreans living upon each other.

The main street, Svetlandskaya, named after the frigate upon which the Grand Duke Alexis visited the port in 1873, follows the curve of the "Golden Horn." Between that street and the shore are the official residences, the public gardens, the Admiralty Garden, the pleasure grounds of the Maritime Club, the native bazaar, and the steamboat quays. This street is crossed by the Aleutskaya, and where they intersect is the commercial centre of the town. The main street is well paved with granite sets, and efficiently drained; the sidewalks are raised, flagged, or asphalted; the houses brick-built and lofty. Several buildings have pretensions to architectural beauty, and to every one who knows Siberia by its older towns Vladivostok

is a pleasing surprise. The improvement is due to the cheapness and thoroughness of Chinese labour. Russians paved the streets, the next year the pavement had to be taken up and relaid — well laid this time — by the Chinese. The Russians made the quay for the Volunteer Fleet; the following year the Chinese made it afresh and their work stands. Russian labour is being abandoned. Even in the naval repairing yard only one Russian is now employed to ten Chinese. Without the Chinese labour Vladivostok would be as Khabarovsk is, an unkempt village. Like that town it has its triumphal arch to commemorate the visit of the Tsarevich to the town. One town has its statue of Muraviev Amurski, the other a monument to Nevelskoi, the promoter of Russian empire in the East; it has a cleanliness, a finish, an air of wealth, and signs of prosperity other Siberian towns lack.

Vladivostok is not quite Russian, or Chinese, and its population is equally foreign. The inhabitants are not scrupulous: their methods are those of the East, and at most they obey the letter rather than the spirit of the law. The Russian official is a past master in this art. It is forbidden for banks to charge 10 per cent. per annum, or more, for discount or interest on loans. The banks dare not disobey. They charge interest at the rate of 9 per cent., plus a commission of $1\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to as much as they think they can obtain. It is said this fashion originated with the State Bank itself. Said a bank official to me, "Soon we shall again be allowed to buy gold from the mines, that gold the State Bank will buy from us at a fixed rate, and we shall give what we like, maybe very little." Goods are very dear; for certain articles ten times as much is paid as one pays in England or Germany; most things are three times as dear, many are five, yet every one is prosperous and apparently content with things as they are. They do not grumble — unless they be foreigners or visitors — they ac-

cept what they think to be inevitable and themselves charge correspondingly for their wares or their services. Vladivostok gives the lie direct to thrift, to economy, to the old saw that honesty is the best policy. It transgresses every law that a small community ought to regard, and it thrives as no conservative, struggling village or town has ever succeeded in persuading itself that it was possible to do. This far-away town, with its societies, museums, electric light, its theatre, gardens, numerous ball-rooms, clubs, fêtes, lotteries, railways, telegraphs, great liners, and ocean cable, has been created within the memory of men who are still young. It has an Eastern Institute which ranks as a university, and will ultimately become one. It has technical, scientific, philosophic, sporting, and musical societies. It is gay with fashionable frivolities; has officials of public spirit and considerable energy, but if it were called upon to produce men beyond reproach in the conduct of their affairs, it probably could not find more than double Abraham's total of chosen from the Cities of the Plain.

It is a much-governed town. In addition to the Military Governor, it has a commandant of the fortress, a Port Admiral, the Admiral of the Fleet in the Pacific, a harbour master, a Director of Customs, and an immigration agent, Mayor, and others, each with a separate jurisdiction.

The progress of Vladivostok is due to several causes: first the ability of its governor — for it is during his residence in the town that the material progress has been most rapid; second, owing to being a naval station it is lived in by officers who know foreign parts and capitals; third, the resident foreign merchants have regarded Vladivostok much as they do one of the treaty ports of China, of which it is a copy. Much is due to the simple fact of the town being a seaport: it is the most southern and longest ice-free of the shipping harbours on the Siberian coast.

Eastern Siberia and its islands have nearly 20,000 versts of shore, and thus the sea fisheries, from the taking of sea-cabbage to whales, is a great industry. The Behring Sea whale fishery has been exploited, chiefly by the Americans, since 1847; the attempts of the Russians were not so successful; the Russo-Finnish company, sailing to the Sea of Okhotsk prior to the Crimean War, had little success; whaling was recommenced in 1891 by Captain Didimov, who perished with his crew in 1892; since 1894 it has been carried on tentatively by Count Keyserling, who has the monopoly of the Siberian coast, and, in addition, receives a subsidy from the State.

The seal fishery has long been a source of State revenue and the cause of many disputes. Little mercy is shown the pirate schooners, and a few years ago American citizens might be seen working in chains on the roads of Vladivostok, whilst one of the smartest Russian revenue gun-boats is a confiscated three-masted American sealing schooner, with auxiliary screw. The Russian company to whom the fishing is leased take about 30,000 head annually. Walrus, various seals, and dolphins, as well as the sea otter — once very common — and bears feed upon the immense quantity of fish with which these northern seas, and especially the fiords and bays, are teeming. The shore after a storm is strewn with dead fish, and at certain points these are piled one upon another, forming a wall yards in width and several feet high. A company has the right to take fish and can them, licences are also granted to Russian fishermen, but now all fishing within the three-mile limit is closed to foreigners. As the Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese were chiefly employed in the industry, the new regulation is certain to provoke reprisals and lead to further illegal fishing. It must be remembered that the sea produce is not required for home consumption, but it is the food of the Chinese and Japanese. Hitherto exporters have paid as duty

five copeeks the pood if Russian subjects, and seven copeeks if foreigners; of the total exports nearly 98 per cent. go to China and Japan; of the imports nearly half are food stuffs, and of the remainder 25 per cent. is composed of manufactured goods, chiefly metal wares, tissues, and building material.

There is no market in Europe for the general produce of Eastern Siberia; furs are shipped, but they realise quite as high prices in China. The coarse sea-fish, the huge mussels, strong-flavoured oysters, and sea-cabbage are suited only to the taste of eastern races. The trepang, or sea-snail (*Holothuria edulis*) has been introduced into Paris restaurants, but the demand is not great. Trepang Bay is the old Chinese name for the Golden Horn of Vladivostok, and a large number of these strange creatures are speared in all the shallows of the coast. In appearance the trepang is something like a long snail traversed from one end to the other by a digestive tube. The creature is more like a stomach than anything else. It walks upon hollow, tentacular feet, which act as suckers. The trepang possesses the extraordinary faculty of ejecting, when frightened or irritated, the entire contents of its body — even to the teeth. When the organs have thus been ejected they presently reproduce themselves. Another faculty is that of spontaneous subdivision. When it is hungry, and cannot find food to nurture the whole of its body, the animal snaps in the middle, and two perfect sea-cucumbers are produced where before there was but one. The trepang is a greatly esteemed delicacy by the Chinese, and some thousands of junks are occupied in fishing for them.

The price is about £70 per ton; they are mainly used for soups, sometimes eaten as other fish, and have a flavour similar to clam.

Panty, or the horns of the stag in the velvet, is another important article of commerce. The Chinaman macerates

SETTLER'S MIXED HERD IN TRANS-BAIKALIA

the bone and dried skin in alcohol, and produces therefrom an *elixir vitæ*, or what is regarded as an infallible restorer of lost vigour. The physicians of Europe say that it has no remedial virtue, and its apparent effect is a mere quickening of the heart's action, just as results from a dose of spirit of hartshorn. They say the same of a like medicinal herb, the ginseng — *Panax gensen* — a variety of ivywort, for which the Chinese pay fabulous prices, and men risk their lives seeking for it in the wilds of Siberia and Manchuria. The horns from which "panty" is made must be perfect, large, and intact. In some places herds of domesticated deer are kept, and their horns sawn off each summer, but these fetch inferior prices to those intact upon the skull.

The Askold Hunting Club of Vladivostok sell the produce of their estate; the highest price for a pair of horns was £90, the average price is about £40, as only the best stags are shot — a policy harmful to the breed.

There are other special industries, as the gathering of bikerit, or sea-wax, on Lake Baikal. Seeking amber on the coast; in the far north for mammoth tusks, and hunting for pearls in the hill streams are other methods of eking out a primitive existence. Natives and settlers both make the most of their opportunities in these fields, and the Government collects, as best it can, the export dues on such commodities as are shipped to the Japanese and Chinese markets. In the south the barter trade with the natives is almost entirely in Chinese hands.

The mineral deposits are rich, but in the opinion of experts the country requires small capitalists and diggers to work the deposits, which are not of sufficient importance to attract large, wealthy corporations. The Government regulations do not favour the private prospector and exploiter, and do not admit him if a foreigner. In the south Ussuri there

is coal of good quality in large quantities. It is superior to that of Sakhalin for household purposes, and a good steam coal is found on the west shore of Amurski Bay, but the existence of anthracite equal to the best Welsh coal, reported to have been found near Possiet Bay, must be doubted. The best deposits are worked by an English, and by an American Company respectively, and it is just possible that Siberia may produce fuel equal to the Japanese coal, scarcely any that is better, for all yet found is quite near the surface; only ninety feet down an eight foot seam of black lignite was struck and is used by the local and Eastern Chinese railways.

Siberia and east of Baikal is in no sense a paradise; its wealth, its progressiveness and independence are relative — in all it is far ahead of real Siberia, and in some things it is in advance of European Russia. It has been influenced by the west into taking foreign goods and accepting American notions. In the wilderness one may happen on a motor tricycle with trailer, just such as is common in France; the American sulky and buggy are ousting the buck-board and tarantass, the American plough is replacing the sokha. Everywhere one hears the gramophone — in Eastern Siberia there must be thousands of them in daily use — and western goods and western ways are far more usual than they are between the Urals and Irkutsk. East of Baikal, the peasant, the artisan, and the trader cannot compete with the Chinaman; if the country is restricted to Russians it can never equal in wealth any British Colony or other portion of the Far East, and must remain what it is at present, a second-rate, slow-moving settlement.

Another fate may be in store for Eastern Siberia if Chinese coolie labour is freely imported as now allowed. The coolies return to China at the end of each summer season, they tend to cheapen the labour market, especially that which requires

intelligence, as building and paving, but no great skill in manipulation of material.

The Chinaman has built Vladivostok; he can raise more on a rood of ground than a Russian farmer will grow upon an acre, and neither the Russian nor the Siberian native can compete with him. He will be master of the country between the Pacific Ocean and Lake Baikal, making of it a second Manchuria, and that without owning a square yard of ground, or having any voice in the government of the country. He succeeds by hard work, and to Russia in the Far East his labour has already become indispensable. The State, and maybe the private capitalists, will benefit, but the Russian peasant is completely outclassed, and all the protection his Government can give him will not suffice to place Siberia in his hands.

CHAPTER XIV

PLAIN SIBERIAN

THE Russian Government regards the natural resources of Siberia as its most valuable asset. It wishes to exploit Siberia in such a manner as will return the largest continuous revenue to the State, enrich Russian subjects rather than foreigners, and remain so far unpledged that the real estate must revert to the Crown. In short, the State will not part with its property, but in exchange for Russian labour will relinquish part of the yield. If by any means the natural resources of the country are exploited in such a manner as to infringe this principle, or the result in any instance proves contrary to the general policy, then that particular method of working is ruthlessly and peremptorily stopped by administrative order.

As the area is forty times greater than that of England, and the inhabitants are estimated at less than one-seventh, the immediate need is population. Now, as heretofore, for political reasons it is in the frontier regions that the Government is most anxious to have colonists on whom it can depend, therefore necessarily orthodox Russians.

The colonisation of Siberia has always been difficult, and always will be so, for taken at its best it is a very ordinary country, far behind British Colonies in facilities for getting its produce to the world's markets, and immigration is hampered by restrictions such as are imposed in no other country.

With this immense territory lying waste, the Government seems not only anxious to add to its extent, but is apparently of opinion that land may become scarce. It pursues the policy of that man of the old rhyme who had a pool of water to which he was always adding and never taking away, until one day when emptying more water into it, he himself fell in and was drowned. For some reason the Government is unwilling to grant freeholds, or to sell land, even to its own subjects, and absolutely forbids foreigners to acquire real property within the empire. It has attempted and is still attempting to create flourishing colonies by other methods.

Military colonies were tried in Russia more than a century ago and found wanting. In the south and east of Russia they have become extinct. Akin to them are the Cossack settlements in Siberia. These were formed for two purposes; first to supply a resident military force near the frontier, secondly to populate the country with a farming element. The two are antagonistic; hence failure in both. The Cossack is essentially a good nomad grazier; immediately he tills the soil he loses the distinctive qualities of the Cossack soldier. He has an immovable stake in the country. He is unwilling to turn out for military work when his allotments require his labour. Great difficulty was experienced in getting the settled Cossacks mobilised for military operations against Manchuria, and the better the soldiers succeed as farmers the worse soldiers they make. As settlers and farmers they are inferior to the agricultural immigrants from Little Russia, inferior to the exiled settlers and their descendants, but they manage to maintain themselves in primitive Cossack fashion. As the child of a Cossack is entitled to succeed to a share in the Cossack holding, or to a free grant of land from the Government, there is a premium on immorality, and the succession is complicated by multitudinous issues difficult to decide and rarely deter-

mined in a way satisfactory to all the parties. The greatest trouble arises when the advantageous situation of a Cossack post leads to its development as an industrial or distributing centre. The progress of Stretensk, Chita, and other places is checked by the Cossack administration, whose military organisation is incompatible with urban government. At Stretensk, with a population of 8000, of whom only 1200 are Cossacks, the military colonists claim to possess all the land in the vicinity — and this at the actual terminus of the great Siberian railway! The same trouble will arise in turn at Gorbitsa, Pokrovka, and other favourable points on the Shilka and Amur rivers, as the country becomes colonised from the west or east.

If the settlement of the land by means of military colonies has failed, the colonisation by administrative order, as at present pursued, is likely to prove equally abortive. A large number of immigrants are returning to their native places in European Russia. They are people who have been allotted land unsuitable for their occupation, who expected an easier life than they found, families who would prove good colonists if properly allocated. The English remedy would be to allow the individual freedom of action within definite limits, and permit him to choose the district, and, if free, the particular lot therein, which he feels capable of occupying profitably. It is doubtful whether such Russian peasants as the Government aids to reach and settle in given parts of Siberian would be capable of choosing wisely, but if they failed they would have themselves only to blame, whereas they now assert the Government, and the Government only, is in fault.

The emigration movement in Russia is to some extent regulated by the liability of the agricultural peasant to pay his way with his commune to the State. In some districts, particularly in Little Russia, where there is congestion, the peas-

JAPANESE RESTAURANT IN VLADIVOSTOK

SHILKA, A COSSACK COLONY

ants are fairly well-to-do as peasants, and liberty to emigrate to Siberia is easily obtained. Then there are poor agricultural districts, with land which may be grazed, but which is not profitable to till, and from these districts it is easy to obtain a transfer. There are also inhabitants whom the communes would prefer to be without; and there are peasants who, from the accounts they have received from former neighbours or from relatives, are desirous of seeking fortune in Siberia. There are also colonial communes who wish to receive further settlers of the right kind; these are generally in a position to guard their interests and to obtain what they require.

When the State attempts to colonise particular districts with free settlers the attempt has proved costly.

In the Maritime provinces, for instance, in 1883 the State paid 1300 roubles, or about £130, to each family volunteering. After 1885, the would-be emigrants had to deposit £60 each family before leaving Russia, and received the sum upon arrival at Vladivostok. These later free colonists have thrived, the State-subsidised families do badly, farm indifferently, and live poorly. According to the official report the first settlers show no improvement. "Their houses are no better than those they had in Russia. The first year even, they are in need of further assistance. The settlers who came of their own accord pay no attention to what these State-subsidised colonists tell them, but follow their own judgment. One result is that they have in the south Ussuri district converted unhealthy tracts of waste marshy land into excellent arable farms."

State immigrants now have the right to the following subsidies: For travelling expenses, each family, 175 roubles; settling expenses, 150 roubles; seed, for two acres; timber as needed. After three years' residence — possibly before — further assistance may be given. In one district 8000 roubles were so given in one summer; 25,000 roubles were demanded.

In fact, the peasant knows the Government will help him, and he is too often content to be helped, and rarely attempts to improve his position beyond that of the mujik in European Russia. It is also a fact that the number of settlers is unsatisfactory. At Cheliábinsk about a hundred thousand register yearly since the opening of the railway; six thousand in addition take the old post-road by way of Tobolsk. Many fall away during the journey. Of the number registered at the border stations, only about three-fifths reach the Far East, because they have not the cash to carry them through to their destination; or they tire of the journey and settle down before reaching the remote district; or they are tempted by seemingly high wages to work in the mines or other industrial enterprises they pass by on their way east.

The unsuccessful agricultural labourer, of the pauper class, is the emigrant most unwisely treated by the State. He and his are either conveyed by sea to Vladivostok, or forwarded overland to Central Siberia. He gets a free pass; he is fed during the long journey, well-housed at his destination, and kept there in idleness, sometimes for months, before being assigned his land. From the Government stores he gets an allowance of provisions and the necessary agricultural implements, seeds, and instruction. He leaves, confirmed in his idleness, fully assured that the State must, and will, support him, and more or less careless of the amount to his debit for advances. Sometimes before he has been asked for the first payment, he is tired of Siberia and work. He cannot clear his ground, the insects annoy him, his stock does not thrive, Siberia does not suit him, the older settlers are against him; so he gives up and drifts. Sometimes the immigration authorities are at fault. They locate men laboriously haphazard. Or, the central authority is to blame by attempting with such immigrants to oust exiled and early free settlers whom the Government consider

to be squatters. Land which has been cleared and made to yield a profitable return is wrested from those who have always tilled it, and apportioned to the more favoured new-comers on terms. Sometimes the new-comers hold to their gift; sometimes the former holders manage to cajole or frighten them away. In such districts there is more strife than honest labour.

The immigrant, who is almost a pauper, is so treated by the immigration officers that as often as not he becomes absolutely pauperised, and learns to depend upon the authorities for everything, everything to him being the bare necessaries of life. The six weeks' sea voyage, the comfortable housing and good food at the immigration station tend to make the peasant disinclined to begin afresh in a rude log-hut on virgin soil, with none but strangers around him, and unknown difficulties and dangers presenting themselves at every turn.

The Cossacks were ordered to occupy the eastern provinces and were assigned tracts of sixty acres each man; this was found to be insufficient, and then was given them all the land along the Cossack frontier to a distance of five miles from the boundary; later this was increased to fifteen miles, but the legality of the order is disputed. Settlers out in the Amur and eastern districts are expected to be content with grants of seven to ten acres a man; and a maximum of 270 acres to a commune of fifteen families. In this territory when, five years ago, it was found that nearly a hundred thousand acres in all had been acquired by settlers, the allotment of common lands to private individuals was forbidden if such land was within sixty miles of the river Amur or the line of any railway, building or proposed to be built. The communes of settlers are allowed a twenty years' lease, renewable on certain conditions and at a higher rent. In all there are only about 130,000 acres actually in occupation throughout the province.

In the littoral territory, where the same rules are enforced,

matters are no better. In a district of 330,500 square miles, ranging 2400 miles from north to south, there are only seventy settlers owning the land they farm. Here, too, the Cossacks are favoured, some having nearly 100 acres a man, and others territorial rights over the land five miles up and down the river and six miles inland from their riparian settlements. To induce ordinary settlers to take up land in this region, the Government gave a free passage to a limited number of families each year, and the railway provided living accommodation at a cost of another 100,000 roubles. Russian subjects resident in America are also allowed to settle in Siberia on the same terms, but the country is not open to foreigners. Each Russian family of pioneer farmers transferred to Eastern Siberia is supposed to have cost the Government about £100 for transportation charges alone.

The settlement of the "land of the white sun" began in 1859; forty years later there were fewer than 7000 families in 110 settlements, having about 10,000 males between the ages of sixteen and sixty, who pay taxes and are liable for military service. Although the settlers in the Amur district had an allotment of about 100 acres to each family, the acreage under cultivation is small—less than 42,000 acres. The settlers themselves number over 45,000, consequently the demand for grain is greater than they can supply, and flour is imported to the extent of over 90,000,000 pounds a year. The meat market is not supplied by the settlers; the towns and garrisons draw their supplies from Manchuria, but it has been recently proposed to forbid the importation of foreign cattle altogether.

The settlers, not being freeholders, do not take that interest in their holdings other pioneer farmers show. They do not nurse their farms, but try to get all that is possible from the virgin soil, and after eight or ten crops have been reared they take over a fresh portion. Hay they mow from the untilled

THE COLONISTS' MARKET IN THE MARITIME PROVINCE

meadow wastes, and, whether old settlers or new, they are accused of rapacious and indiscreet farming, because they do not develop the land they temporarily occupy. The Molokans, Dukhobors, and other sectarian settlers are the most active farmers, and have the latest improved machinery, but, in the words of an official report, "this fact does not prove that husbandry has become subjected to a more national organisation or progressed in any way. All this new machinery only serves to extend the wasteful exploitation of the land." Any sort of cultivation is better than none, though the authorities may not think so.

In Siberia it is the Chinaman alone who stoops to the *petite culture* of the spade, and raises vegetables as though his farm were a garden.

According to the official returns of the south Ussuri district, the harvest is entirely dependent on the amount of cultivation. While millet, the Chinese grain, yields 500-fold, the average return of sown crops is fifteen to twenty fold under Chinese cultivation, eight to ten fold from the lands occupied by Russian settlers.

The Chinese compete successfully against Russians in farming, yet they will not work in the fields whilst it rains, and it is during the rainy season that most of the cultivating is done in Siberia. The Chinese and Koreans already settled in the Maritime provinces number nearly 30,000, exclusive of coolies employed temporarily in towns.

Trade is brisk everywhere, but commerce is in its infancy. Much of what is produced is consumed locally, and the demand is increasing. From Western Siberia, many tons of butter find a way to the English market, but it is by way of Denmark, where it is remade and so handled as to render it indistinguishable from "best Danish." Some corn reaches Russia, some is exported, much more might be raised and marketed profitably.

Siberia has some of the finest meadow and prairie grazing ground in the world; the stock in a few districts is good, but must be improved if it is to compete with imported meat in the English market. Much of the best land is in the hands of people who know no better way of using milk than allowing it to stand until sour, then eating the curds. Other settlers understand farming better; these succeed, and in a few years want better machinery than the Government depots supply. They combine to purchase the latest harvesters, reapers, and threshers, and can glut a local market. What Siberia wants most is men — good farmers and hard workers. If Siberia were thrown open to the world to colonise it would get men of the right kind. But as the foreigner may not own land in the Russian Empire, it will not get them, for none will be so unwise as to go so far simply as tenant farmers. Siberia must wait for the slow, uncertain methods of the Russian settler to enrich her; the peasant who is slow in coming and slow in getting to work, the peasant who has no aspiration and is content to derive from the soil the bare necessaries of life for himself and his family. In his wake there are as many artisans, traders, and non-producers as his labour will support. The most popular cartoon in Siberia is one showing the peasant tilling in order to enrich State and Church officials, middlemen, and manufacturers. At the present rate of settlement, it will take generations to colonise Siberia, so that in the end Russia must be outstripped, for British colonies and other lands, with no greater natural advantages, have a much greater population, and produce much more wealth.

Taken altogether, Siberia is a very ordinary country; much of it, the barren lands of the Arctic zone and the stunted forests, possesses no wealth. The remainder has ample resources, but they need exploitation, and to make of Siberia as rich a country as it could and should be, it is necessary to

attract thither without delay colonists as good as the average emigrants from Western Europe. Such colonists would need to work hard, and be nursed and protected by the State in addition, if Siberia is ever to rival colonies like Canada and Australia, which have obtained an enormous start. It will not be sufficient to people the country, as Russia is peopling it, with peasants whose ideas of agriculture are rudimentary, who know not how to grow fruits or avail themselves of foreign markets; or with men content to labour in mines for a rouble a day, when workers at gold mines elsewhere make five times as much, and are able to spend all they receive. Such settlers as Siberia is receiving are worth little more to the industrial centres of Russia than are the native Mongol tribes who feed, clothe, and house themselves entirely without outside help. For the settlers have few wants, and fewer opportunities to attain positions in advance of those they occupied in Western Russia; they become self-supporting, but not rich, and they do not add to the wealth of the land on which they live.

With the present conditions of settlement and exploitation, the wilder, remoter Siberia has no prospect of a satisfactory future for its inhabitants. There is no wealth to attract great companies, no freedom for the individual gold-digger or pioneer, and no certainty of tenure for whomsoever might attempt to win from Nature the best she will yield in the way of base minerals, fuel, or timber. With enormous forests rotting with age or being burned out through the carelessness of settlers, Siberia has had to import wood for its railways from America. With excellent wheat land and a climate favourable to good growth and detrimental to all insect pests, it has to import grain or flour from abroad; with fine prairie land, excellent pasturage and hay in abundance to be had anywhere for the harvesting, Siberian towns have to be supplied with meat from China and elsewhere. With climate and soil suited

to fruit growing, all fruits and vegetables are imported, because the attempts made to cultivate the varieties from European Russia have not succeeded.

Siberia would be better entitled to its new name of the Golden East if it were cultivated so as to provide a yearly surplus of commodities, instead of being drained of its gold, its furs, and wild products. Siberia needs, or will need, a forestry department such as that of India; commissioners of inland fisheries, and laws for the protection and propagation of fish in lakes and rivers: a Board to regulate the draining of marsh lands and the irrigation of meadows, in the many districts where the rivers are silting up and changing into bitter lakes to become in turn desolate wastes. Until these things are done and done well, the country will not support a large population of thriving agriculturists — a population which can found towns and maintain the inhabitants of them in circumstances equal to those shopkeepers and artisans find in European cities. Up to the present Siberian trade is unimportant, considering the area and population. The special exports are mostly natural products from the slopes on the Pacific coast. The trades are not encouraged by the State because chiefly practised by foreigners, and one of the latest restrictions is directed against the quite harmless sea-fishing on the Pacific, because the Japanese particularly have surpassed the Russians in developing it. From the end of the 1901–2 winter it is to be reserved for Russian subjects.

If official publications may be taken as trustworthy, Siberia is the victim of much rapacity from private individuals who attempt to enrich themselves at the expense of her natural resources. The native trappers kill everything they can catch; the traders buy for as little as the sellers will take, and the Chinese, with whom alone some of the natives will deal, even trust the natives and give them credit, and thus "rapaciously

exploit" them. Away in the frozen north, where it costs more nearly £200 a year than one to maintain a workman at the gold mines, the Government plaint is that the last grain of gold is not extracted from the tailings, and that gravel with less than a zolotnik to the hundred poods is thrown aside as worthless. When the working season is so short, and there is gravel obtainable containing four zolotniks to the measure instead of one, only a Chinaman would stop to work the poorer earth.

The policy adopted by the Government may be sound, but the execution fails because too much is attempted. It is quite right to protect the native inhabitants, to provide that the mining or other companies encroaching upon their lands shall pay for surface disturbance and allow way-leaves for fishing, hunting, and trapping, but, because the regulations cannot be enforced by the Government or understood by the natives, there must be quarrels, and it would be better to permit the natives' rights to be bought out, and themselves settled elsewhere than around a colony of imported labour. Instead of failing to prevent the daring, individual trader from bartering liquor with the natives, it would be better to make each district over to a company, such as the Hudson Bay Company is in Canada. And, beyond all, instead of reserving immense tracts for possible further exploitation by the Government, it would be better for Siberia to encourage the adventurous gold-digger from every country, and allow him to enrich himself and his neighbours.

Where, then, is the Golden East? So far as the outside world is concerned it certainly is not to be found in Siberia. The country is not new in the sense westerners understand. It has been sparsely populated for centuries; it has towns hoary with age compared with the thriving cities of Western America or the British Australian colonies. The men who

discovered the Kara Sea route into Mid-Siberia believed they would tap a new country, and were surprised to find large towns and a complex administration of Imperial laws and local bye-laws in forest villages, by men as familiar with western schools of thought and modern usages as were the adventurers themselves. Siberia has grown slowly, but it has never had the vigour and elasticity of youth, and the attempts now being made to coax it into robust healthy manhood are far from being successful.

No system is so little likely to produce men as that which at present prevails in Siberia. The natives alone are independent. The colonists depend upon the local officials, almost every official depends upon the man in the office above him, and too often the man high in office depends upon the heads of his department in St. Petersburg.

The officials are frequently changed or, at least, are moved from place to place. Most think only of their own advancement in rank, knowing that if only they can hold their places long enough promotion will come in time, for preferment is due to "pull," not to the preferred individual's own quality of "push." The local men are too frequently harassed by the departmental inspector from the capital, a man who has no local experience or practical knowledge of the wants of a neighbourhood, but is grounded in general theories of government and who honestly believes that by writing on paper he can effect reforms. You can get in Russia statistics on every conceivable subject; reports, theories, plans, projects innumerable; excellent surveys of rivers have been made, but good charts of navigable channels are rare — there reform ends, when it is dredgers and groins that are wanted worst of all. If the room were cold you would get ten officials to note the thermometer, shake it, and make drawings of improved instruments, charts, and scales, but not a man of them to put a few

HIGH STREET, NIKOLSKOE-USSURI

A STREET SCENE IN RUSSIA

blocks of wood in the stove. If any one thought of that he would wait an order from St. Petersburg before he would direct any one to do it. The amount of fuel to be used in a Government stove would have been settled by order, and as had been ordered, so, no doubt, had all been done, and the remedy would need to be found elsewhere — so the officials would argue. If England suffers from red tape Siberia is bound in crimson cables — yet not so much so as is Russia. The ludicrous extent to which officialism is carried may be exemplified by a recent event. Vladivostok is riverless and fisherless. Russian fishermen from Nikolaievsk went down to the port with a cargo of fish, and were provided with a certificate from the customs that the catch was Russian. The cargo was not allowed to enter because, as some regulation indicated, goods in bond must be sealed, and though the hatches had the seals of the Nikolaievsk Customs, the fish themselves had not — and it was the fish, not the hatches which were to be imported. So the cargo was taken north again, and Vladivostok market remains fishless.

Sometimes there are occasions when the local official gets his opportunity. He ought to act, but he will not. Then comes the time — but seldom, it is true — when he not only ought to act, but must. He generally acts well in the circumstances, and if it is a matter of importance, his renown reaches high quarters and he is rewarded. But if it is not a matter of general importance or public danger, the general wish is to keep the affair secret, lest it should be reported and possibly give a chance for some higher official to criticise. The chinovnik has little or no confidence in his own judgment; he must follow the particular instructions in the multitudinous orders which are showered upon him from various departments.

Siberia has been made, so far as it is made, by men who have troubled less for authority than do those who now come

out to take office. Men who have been exiled or convicted, and have made the most of such opportunities as were presented to them, have arisen to wealth and sometimes to office. Others have succeeded by craft; they are authorised to deal in one commodity, and for it substitute another; they may barter salt, but their salt is spirit; they may go north, and instead, go east. Others, under cover of their official positions, have traded or acquired property. When detected they have resigned, and to avoid a scandal the resignation has been accepted. Then they have continued to trade and to acquire property. Of the foreign firms who have succeeded there are comparatively few. Their number increases but slowly, and the opportunities for acquiring wealth in the manner the pioneers gained it are decreasing.

CHAPTER XV

RUSSIA AND THE YELLOW MAN

WHERE the Kumara runs into the Amur there rises a fine bluff which is surmounted with an immense iron cross to commemorate a meeting of "competent men" held to confer as to the requirements of the Russian riparian provinces. The tablet on the memorial is inscribed with the words "Power lies not in force, but in love," from the opening address of the then Governor, Baron Korff. Within a hundred miles of the cross is the scene of the terrible massacre of Chinese by the Russians in 1900. It is a long way from the text of Baron Korff, to the acts which culminated in the crime at Blagoveshchensk, but so long ago as 1886, the conference of "competent men" at Khabarovsk decided that "the Chinese in the district are obnoxious, and are to be tolerated only so long as they are necessary. Such measures must be taken as will gradually put pressure upon them, and force them to leave us."

Russian character is assumed to be so much nearer akin to the Chinese as to give Russians a superior position over western nations in dealing with the people of the Far East. Those who fear the western migration of the Chinese look to Russia as the bulwark which will prevent the "yellow danger" reaching Europe; a simple confidence which facts may shake. Russia has not demonstrated that she is more capable than others in dealing with the Chinese; she is as unable as other nations

to find a people able to compete with the yellow races in particular industries, and instead of Russia colonising and controlling Manchuria and China, it is possible that in the end Siberia will be peopled by the native races of the Pacific littoral.

Much of the country east of Baikal, if not absolutely occupied by the Chinese, was overrun by fugitives and adventurers from Manchuria and the Chinese provinces further to the south. In time these were driven back into Manchuria. In 1885 all Mantzi within Russian territory were required to take out Russian passports according to special rules, paying five roubles each for these, and three roubles fine for any delay; those not possessing passports at a later date specified, were put across the border and given into the charge of the Chinese Governor. This stopped the influx of criminal Chinese, and put considerable power into the hands of petty officials.

The Koreans in the territory were not treated in the same manner, but, as the natives, were regarded as Russian subjects. They submitted to Russian laws and were governed by Russian authorities. The Koreans are a lazy, thriftless people; the Russians say three of them dig with one spade, and, at Khabarovsk the same opinion was expressed with regard to them as quoted in reference to the Chinese population.

The influx from Korea was stayed; the Koreans in the territory — there is a Korean colony as far north as Blagoslovennoe on the Amur, 712 versts from Blagoveshchensk — were forbidden to wear their hair Korean fashion, or to found isolated settlements. Actually no notice is taken of these enactments. The Koreans wear their national costume, live in their own settlements, cultivate their holdings, raise enough for themselves, and have as little as possible in common with their Russian rulers as they have with their Chinese competitors. A quiet, inoffensive people, they endure whatever treat-

ment may be accorded them, and in the end go on as they have done from time immemorial.

The enactments against the Chinese are used as a source of income by local officials, sometimes these men — whether within or beyond their legal rights — subject the helpless Chinese to rules of their own making. For instance, not so long ago, the chief of police in the town of Vladivostok issued an order that all the Chinese in the district, numbering over 30,000, should have upon their passports a miniature portrait of the chief of police himself. For this the usual charge made was a rouble, and many thousands were sold before some person of superior authority stopped the practice. This same man, in order to squeeze money from the Chinese, on another occasion summoned all the well-to-do coolies, the "boys" in good employ, and petty traders, to repair at once to an open space, where a large number was coralled and a passport demanded of each man. Whoever could not produce the paper, properly in order, was commanded to purchase a copy at once, at the price of five roubles. Those who asked leave to go to their homes in order to fetch the paper were allowed to do so upon payment of a fine of five roubles each, and an extra rouble to the man who accompanied them — the same extra fee was exacted from those who had not the required ready money upon them, and could not, or would not, borrow of their fellows. That plan would not answer a second time — the foreign merchants whose "boys" had been taken from them were loudest in complaining — so more recently another method was devised. A petition was sent to the head of the department in St. Petersburg praying that a certain Chinaman, a small tradesman, whose name was given, might have the sole right of granting leave to Chinamen to stay in, or to leave, the country, as they were so very numerous that the police, having more than enough to do with Siberian inhabitants, wished to be relieved of this duty in

respect of the Chinese. The answer was the issue of an authorisation to the person named. It was not a sole authorisation, so the recipient, doubtless after conferring with the petitioner, went to the other official who had the right to issue passports, and tried to bargain for the sole right. "Instead of charging these Chinese nine roubles," said he, "I will charge fifteen, and of the extra six you shall have two, the Chief will have two, and two I will keep for my trouble."

Sometimes the Chinese find ways of getting even with the Government, certainly they make one passport serve for a good number of different men, and they are clever smugglers. The import duty on a suit of clothes for a Chinese coolie is about two roubles. Every ten days or so throughout the open season a ship brings five hundred or more coolies to Vladivostok. On one occasion a merchant came by the ship, and gave to each man a new suit of clothes, even to *ula*, or moccasins, to wear whilst going on shore, and promised each ten copeeks if they went straightway to a place named, and gave up the suits there. The Chinamen were delighted to oblige; the authorities made no objection to these men landing — such well-dressed, clean-looking coolies had never come to the port before. Not a Chinaman failed to return his clothes, as new, into store; and the customs was deprived of £50, a small matter, but one of many leakages the Chinese produce by their persistence.

The Russians attempt to best the Chinese in every deal, and boast of their successes. They also "bully" the coolies, but in my presence were never so harsh and cruel as the Chinese are to each other. In fact the Russians not infrequently stop the Chinese from killing each other in their quarrels. I have also seen an immigrant showing, very good-humouredly, a Chinaman how to dig up his own potatoes without spoiling the crop by cutting into the tubers with a spade. The "boy"

BLAGOVESHCHENSK, FROM SAKHALIAN

objected; the Russian persisted. The Chinaman went for the police; who came at once upon his call and only by superior knowledge of "pidgin Russian" convinced the "boy" that he was in the wrong.

Of the many stories one heard of Russian superiority the following is typical.

A Manchu noble, who had browbeaten his fellow-travellers, alighted at Fu-li-ahdé, at the same time warning his companions that he would decapitate any of them presuming to appropriate his seat. A smartly dressed and good looking young Russian lady entered the coupé, and took the unoccupied seat, despite the friendly advice of the other passengers. The Manchu returned, flew into a rage, and drew his curved sabre. The young lady, coolly covering him with a shining revolver, said, "You have threatened to decapitate any one taking your seat. Do you take us for a pack of cowardly Mandarins?" and pointing to the space at her feet, she observed, "There is your place, my hero." The Manchu surrendered, accepted the lowly position, and watched the revolver.

The darkest page in the history of Russo-Chinese relations is that concerned with the massacre at Blagoveshchensk in 1900. Of that horrible crime the Russians do not care to speak, and though the main facts are fairly well known it is difficult to get any two eye-witnesses to agree as to the details. I heard more than a dozen accounts of what took place, from persons who were in Blagoveshchensk at the time; from some who actually witnessed the work of slaughter, but all the versions vary greatly. There seems to be no accurate knowledge of the number of Chinese in the town on July 15, 1900; there were certainly more than three thousand, and fewer than twelve. It is also known that troublous times were apprehended by the Chinese themselves: the authorities if not actually warned, certainly ought to have observed such unmistakable

symptoms as the evacuation of the town by the leading merchants and well-to-do Chinese residents. That they did not, proves either that the Russians are not so vigilant and tireless as we think them to be, or that they do not understand the Chinese so thoroughly as they profess to do.

The firing upon the vessels passing up the Amur, until done from the forts, could hardly be accepted as an act of war, since it was not altogether uncommon. The Chinese outlaws on the south bank not infrequently made attacks upon those navigating the river, and, although the Russians did visit Aigun frequently, there was no general intercourse; they were hooted in the streets, and the Chinese who conducted them were seriously mauled, and sometimes put to death for having brought "foreign devils" into the settlement. In fact, the local Chinese thought the Russians wished to occupy the country, and did all they dare to deter them. The exclusion of the Russians from Manchuria was as complete as the dwellers on the river bank could render it.

Soon after the ships arrived at Blagoveshchensk with the news that they had been fired upon, measures were taken to secure all the river craft from the Chinese side of the stream, in order that the town might not be invaded from the small Chinese settlement, Sakhalian, immediately opposite the Russian town. Here the river is about eight hundred yards in width, and in summer about nine feet in depth in the main channels. On the Saturday evening there was great excitement in the China-town, crackers were fired, and the inhabitants of Blagoveshchensk became thoroughly alarmed. There were fewer than five hundred soldiers in the town, and the citizens were hastily enrolled and armed. Next day when the town was fired upon, and it was evident that war was meant, panic seized the authorities and instead of interview-

ing the Chinamen in the town, who remained quiet and could have persuaded their fellow-countrymen to withdraw, it was decided — some say on the receipt of telegraphic orders from St. Petersburg — to force the Chinamen to cross the river to the Manchurian side. In order to do this successfully their quarter of the town was raided, and the Chinamen thus secured driven at the point of the bayonet towards Verkhne-Blagoveshchensk, some three miles up the river from the centre of the town, and there forced into the river though they could not ford the stream. Those who attempted to regain the shore were fired upon.

Some parties were persuaded, rather than forced, to go to Verkhne-Blagoveshchensk, believing that there they would find means for reaching the other side, and, as the Chinese were all practically unarmed, they were quite as terror-stricken at being in the power of the Russians, as the Russians were by the belief that they were at the mercy of the China-town population. The approach to the river bank being at a right angle, the Chinese and the guards were prevented by the rising ground from seeing what was taking place in the river, until they were actually upon its brink. On arriving there the guards rushed the helpless Chinese down the steep declivity into the water. As each succeeding party arrived the same thing happened; and party after party, and day after day saw the same end. Men were tied together by their pigtails, and so fastened forced into the river; old and young, women and children, were flung into the stream if they did not enter it readily and quickly enough for the frenzied guards, and so the Chinese population of Blagoveshchensk was absolutely wiped out.

Some state that the water was so low that the river could be forded. As a matter of fact at the time I passed the spot the steamer could not find five feet of water, and when the massacre occurred the river was nearly a foot lower still. There

were, or had been, rafts, which would have served to float the parties across, but the Chinese overcrowded them, and in their endeavours to regain their places drowned each other. Some state that the Chinese themselves wished to get across, and in making the attempt got drowned, others that all might have crossed safely on Saturday evening. Others again, that the Chinese had no chance; that the citizens themselves were forced by the military to assist them in the work. Some attribute the holocaust to panic; some to Government Order. Whichever it may have been, there is no doubt that the act itself was needless; that it was performed with terrible brutality; and that it was carried beyond those limits a civilised people recognise as within their capacity.

The blame attaches to many; technically, General Gribski, the Governor of the province, was responsible. This he admitted, though repudiating participation in the massacres. Possibly the crime saved Blagoveshchensk, but it smirched Russian fame and stained Russian honour. To boast by proclamation that the river was seething with Chinese dead was but to perpetuate a memory others would gladly have obliterated.

General Gribski has recently been relieved of his command — it is said he will be appointed to Archangel or some inferior post, as a mark of the disapprobation felt by his superiors at St. Petersburg. His conduct, and that of the military under his command, appears worse when it is remembered that the isolated companies of Russians in Manchuria, when they were taken by surprise and panic-striken at the Boxer rising around them, instead of giving way to excessive reprisals, saved themselves against greater odds than the citizens of Blagoveshchensk had to contend against, moreover they, instead of abandoning the Chinese Christian converts and labourers — as was done in parts of China Proper by other for-

eigners — protected them, and brought all to places of safety within Russian territory. Blagoveshchensk and Kharbin show exactly the difference existing between the Russian military authorities and the mere civilians. No words of censure are strong enough to condemn the cowardly crime of Blagoveshchensk, none too complimentary for the heroism displayed by the engineering parties in Manchuria under similar circumstances.

The massacres of Blagoveshchensk were but the beginnings of a series of extirpatory measures against the Chinese in the vicinity. As soon as possible troops were drafted into the district, and all the Chinese settlements along the river were absolutely destroyed. The inhabitants were not spared; the wretched *fantzas* from Mokhó, near the Shilka, to Hao-lin on the Ussuri, crumbled under artillery fire; refugees who had taken shelter within, were burned with the débris. Eye-witnesses who followed the army to Sakhalian, Aigun, and smaller Chinese stations, state that the horrors of Blagoveshchensk were far exceeded; men, women, children, and animals all suffered together in the flames of the fired villages, and the country everywhere was laid waste, and the inhabitants chased into the forests at the point of the bayonet. In such way was Northern Manchuria cleared by the Russians in the twentieth century. Now the Russian himself will scarcely credit what he knows to have taken place, and the Chinese who escaped — for some reached the Manchurian side from Blagoveshchensk — are already returning. The merchants thought to be dead are establishing themselves in the town again, and paying up the debts they had incurred to Russian subjects.

The Russian treatment of the Chinese in war is more brutal than that shown by any civilised race to the most cruel savages. At the same time the general treatment of the individual Chinaman by the individual Russian is far more humane than that

shown to inferior races by Europeans and Americans generally. The Russian is more readily sympathetic to Asiatics than is the Englishman; his attitude is one of unfeigned interest in all people, no matter how much they may differ from himself mentally and physically. He never forgets that one God created us all in his own image, whereas some people of other races seem surprised that men of a different colour should be placed upon the same earth with themselves. Neither colour nor creed bar intimacy and friendliness, and it is this ready assimilative quality in the Russian character, this tendency to familiarity, which enables the race to deal directly and advantageously with all who come in contact with them.

The Chinese merchant has already got as far west as Irkutsk. East of Baikal, the Chinese petty trader may be said to be supreme, having the largest share of the trade with the native tribes, and always and everywhere increasing his business. The Russian labourer does not find the competition serious until he reaches the Maritime provinces, and then only south of the Amur; but in Khabarovsk and at the stations along the Russian shore of the river, the Chinaman is gradually ousting the Russian working-man, the artisan, and the trader. The townsman raises the loudest outcry, but the authorities pay small attention to his complaints. These Russian settlers, instead of being able to make the profits they expected, find themselves undersold by the Chinese everywhere, and many are so disgusted that they go back west.

The larger retail traders also feel the competition, for now some of the finest and best-stocked shops are held either by individual Chinese merchants, or are the branch establishments of Chinese companies which run the business through local managers, just as they work the laundries in America. As these traders draw their supplies from Shanghai and the Chinese treaty-ports, more English and American goods are found

in their stores than in the shops of the Russian and German traders.

The Japanese artisan is found through Eastern Siberia, and for the most part thrives. The manual skill and general ability of the Japanese I believe to be largely overrated, but in Siberia he fills a decided want. His race is detested by Russians. In the crafts the Jap is somewhat in advance of the average Russian; in sobriety, diligence, and trustworthiness he is immeasurably superior. Settlers, men of education possessing general as well as local knowledge, have explained to me that the Maritime provinces must become uninhabitable by Russians if the immigration of the yellow races is permitted to continue. One, an able man, was emigrating to California because there his children might have a chance. He knew both countries, and owned that for him it was far easier to make money in Siberia than America, but he saw no future for the country, and so determined to bring up his children where they would not have to compete with a race which he believed was certain to occupy the country to which he had come as a settler from Great Russia fifteen years before.

The Chinese frontier abuts against Siberia, it extends thousands of miles, in many wild unsettled districts, and across the hills and streams which divide the two empires the Chinese can make their way unobserved and, as the yellow settler undoubtedly adds to the revenue of the country in which he trades, it is not surprising that the Russian State hesitates to exclude him. The urban settlers contend that the authorities actively encourage this immigration, but in support of this I could not discover any evidence.

Manchuria is the country to which all look for indications as to the real strength of the yellow race in a struggle for existence with Europeans. There the Chinese and Russians may be expected to engage in commercial rivalry, and if re-

cent reports are trustworthy, the Russian is not so sure of his own superiority, since all races are to be invited to settle in this country and so share the chances Russia has engaged to take. Whether or not they will do so in the same manner as the Russians are doing is problematical. Undoubtedly the Japanese will avail themselves of every opportunity, but that unfortunately will not prove satisfactory to either Russians or European settlers.

It is the Russian rather than the Caucasian race that is on its trial. Russia is only connected with the West and not really of it, and the Russian prides himself that his race understands better than any other how to manage Asiatic peoples. Recent events have not supported this contention, nor even that the country which is the connecting link between east and west can interpret effectively. Probably Manchuria will prove to be the school in which the white and yellow races will learn most concerning each other, and that in the near future.

CHAPTER XVI

RUSSIAN EMPIRE BUILDERS

RUSSIA has won an empire in Asia. The story of the acquisition is interesting. The conquest began with the natural expansion of the Slavs in the lands vacated by the retiring Mongols; it was continued as a raid for booty by Yermak, and by the Stroganovs as a trading venture. The Russian pioneers, Khabarov and his like, were rapacious adventurers simply.

The State, having to protect its subjects, found in the complaints of robber bands made by the pioneers a sufficient excuse for the extension of territory. From the old Siberian road through Guirev and Petropavlovsk, the lands, twelve hundred miles in a straight line to the south, were annexed in a half-century. General Bronevski was the pioneer here. In 1846 Dmitri Gorchakov allowed a military force to be sent after Izzet Kutehan, or Kenessar, a Turcoman robber whose ability to evade capture seems to have been equal to that of Christian de Wet. An army was despatched to defeat him. It erected a fort near the Altai, on the borders of China. Apparently the troubles in the steppe region, with the military operations required to deal with them, were as remunerative to the officers engaged, as the building of the Siberian railways at subsequent periods proved to the engineers employed. Difficulties were magnified. Little collections of mud huts like Pishpek and Tokmak were blown to atoms with artillery. In order that

substantial evidence of great victories might not be lacking, it is said that Zimmerman, and other generals, even went so far as to have made and sent to St. Petersburg keys of strongholds which never possessed even gates.

The Emperor Nicholas I. was most aggressive. It is stated that when Governor Obruchov was putting permanent garrisons on the Khirgis steppes, he sent to headquarters frequent reports of progress, on one of which the Tsar wrote: "It appears to me that it would be better to put forts on the Syr-Daria than on the Yemba." This meant a line of forts about 250 miles further across the desert, but it was construed as an Imperial command, and the attempt to comply with it led to the conquest of Turkestan.

Obruchov agreed with Napoleon that waste land was the most impassable barrier for an army, so he devastated the steppe country, destroyed Bashkir settlements, drove some of the people into Russia, and settlers have now at great pains and expense to win back the land he threw out of cultivation.

Perovski, a later governor, had a fleet on the Aral, saying that he required it to supply the people with necessaries. When told there were no people there to supply, he answered, "Then the fleet will bring them." General Katinin, who succeeded him, was an old man, but very ambitious. He wrote to Ivan Tolstoi, the friend and companion of Gorchakov, "It is imperative for us to go on making war here, and it is impossible for us to stop until we have conquered Meshed, Herat, and Balkh."

It is indisputable that the generals appointed to posts in Asia made opportunities for war. They wanted war to make a name, to get promotion and extra pay, if not for the sole purpose of making a fortune out of the contracts and allowances passed by the departments — a practice not confined to Russia or to ancient times.

The Emperor Nicholas is also responsible for the extensions in the Far East. He wished the frontier to be a straight line, after the style of the "49th parallel," running from Abaget to the mouth of the Liao, thus giving Russia four-fifths of Manchuria. Nesselrode is credited with the details of the scheme, and finding the right man to execute it.

Nikolai Nikolaivich Muraviev, afterwards to become the honoured "Amurski," was born in St. Petersburg, 1810, served in the Caucasus, and later was with Paskevich at the taking of Warsaw; in 1836 he was made Governor of Kursk, and in 1840 of Grodno, in both districts ruling with great severity. He was relieved of his office and sent to Eastern Siberia to investigate in 1847. He returned to St. Petersburg, where his plans were approved, his instructions being to act according to circumstances, but not to ask for money. He set about making irregular troops from the Trans-Baikalian exiles and the convicts working in the Crown mines there.

Gavrilov, on the *Konstantin*, had discovered the mouth of the Amur in 1846, but Admiral Gennadi Ivanovich Nevelskoi was the man who annexed the territory, founding the port which afterwards became Nikolaievsk. His action was repudiated by his superiors in St. Petersburg, but an appeal from the Council to the Emperor resulted in his favour, the Tsar observing that, "where the Russian flag had been hoisted it must not be lowered," a declaration which has become a policy, regarded by the Russians with as much reverence as is the Monroe doctrine by Americans.

In 1854, Muraviev raised half a million roubles, then got together twelve battalions of irregular soldiery, and two of regulars. Next he obtained permission of the Chinese to build two vessels — the *Argun* and *Shilka* — with which to trade to Kamchatka. In addition to these steamers he had a number of barges with stores, and rafts for his cattle, horses, and

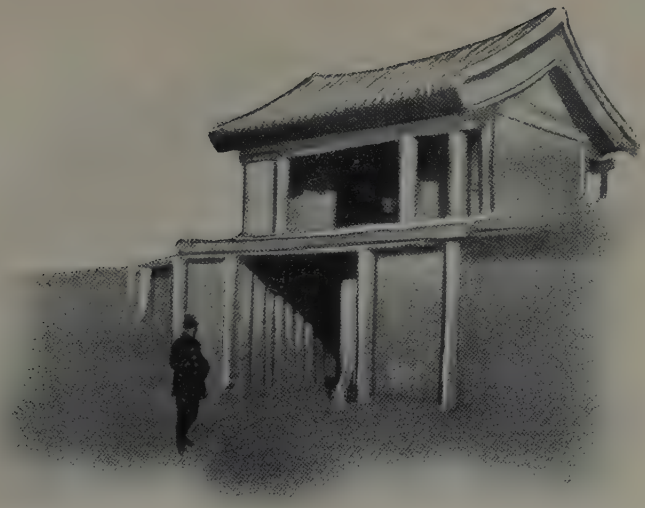
soldiery. Taking with him the two battalions of regulars he floated the expedition down stream intending to reach Nikolaievsk.

The result of that voyage has already been told.

The Crimean war interfered but little with the progress of affairs in the Far East. Muraviev went to Kars, then to Moscow, but in 1855 another expedition to the mouth of the Amur was fitted out, and used to reinforce the army near Nikolaievsk, the river being left in charge of Korsakov, and supplies furnished by Zaborenski who was Governor of Irkutsk. Between them they nearly wrecked the Russian Empire of the east.

Korsakov gave Obruchov 600 men, and told him to go along the Amur and make his connections with Baikal, by forced marches at an average rate of nearly twenty-seven miles a day up stream. The party got stopped by the ice between the Kumara and Kutumando, so they broke up, and in small parties went ahead as fast as they could for fifteen days, suffering terrible privations, and losing more than half their number. Korsakov was attending the coronation of Alexander II. in Moscow and getting confirmed in his command and raised in rank. At the end of 1857 the Russians occupied the Upper Amur as far as Barinski, and no sooner was the treaty of Argun signed in 1858, than an expedition was sent up the Ussuri into the former coast-province of Manchuria, and the following year was spent in colonising it, Bugodorski being despatched there with unlimited authority and some fifteen thousand roubles. Bussé, a reasonable, but somewhat weak man, was made Governor of Blagoveshchensk by Muraviev, who wanted him out of the army, and Muraviev himself retired two years later, becoming a State Councillor in 1861.

Korsakov succeeded Bussé, and his rule lasted ten years;



THE GATES OF KHAILAR

MANCHURIAN SIGN-POST

neither he nor his successor, Baron Friedrichs (who retired in 1880), extended the empire, and the consolidation and development of the provinces made more progress under the administration of Baron Korff, who was Governor-General of the Pri-Amurski country from 1884 to 1893. Dukhovski succeeded him, but it was soon seen that a man of greater experience and initiative was required for the troublous times expected.

The present Governor-General, Nikolai Ivanovich Grodekov was born in 1842 at Kherson; entered the 3rd Rifle Battalion in 1862, took the Staff Course, 1868, and subsequently obtained a command in Kuban. He served in the Caucasian war, was in the Khiva campaign 1873, Kokand 1878, and the Akhal-Tekinskoe expedition 1879, going through the Turkestan war with Skobelev. After work in Askabad, Samarkand, and Herat, he was appointed in 1883 Governor of the Syr-Daria province, a post he held for ten years. During this period he made a close study of the Khirgis and has written much respecting their customs, government, land tenure, &c., but as a writer is best known by a sensational thesis, "Through Afghanistan." Of strong anti-British proclivities and rare administrative attainments, a better man for the forward move in Asia could not have been chosen. He is now Adjutant-General, practically absolute ruler of all the Russian Empire east of Baikal, as well as Commander-in-Chief of the forces there and in Manchuria, which new country he has garrisoned with his favourite Kubanski Cossacks, physically the finest men of all the divisions of that famous cavalry.

General Grodekov is a short, well-built, energetic man; his hair is almost white, but there are traces of youthful blackness in his short beard and moustache. He speaks decisively and quickly, but his bearing is not brusque, and his manners are courteous and pleasing. His antipathy to England and the

English is his worst quality; unlike many Russian officers he will not take bribes, and like some famous English empire builders he is a bachelor.

Local gossip in the Far East indicated that General Grodekov and Admiral Alexeiev were not in accord as to Manchuria, but the differences which existed, if any, must have been assumed, the better to mislead the foreigner. One of the last acts of Admiral Alexeiev on the Pacific station was a long journey in order to confer with General Grodekov, and the first honour awaiting him, on his arrival in St. Petersburg, was promotion to the post of Councillor of State; the two together, an indication that Russia's immediate concern is with her eastern policy.

Admiral Alexeiev has the reputation of being too ardent a worker to be popular with the majority of his officers; he is, and always has been, of an active temperament, and he possesses the rare quality of being able to go to sleep whenever he has been badly worsted or thwarted. Trouble seems to weigh lightly upon him; he tires slowly and recuperates rapidly. His knowledge of the Far East is thorough and extensive, and although it is hinted that when upon the Pacific station, he was somewhat susceptible to American influence, there is little doubt that he remains a Russian of the Russians, and in him the Tsar has not only a capable Councillor, but one who has at his finger-ends all the threads of eastern policy and intrigue, besides possessing an intimate acquaintance of the officials, foreign and native, interested in the direction of affairs in the Far East.

General Grodekov's chief subordinates are men of widely different calibre. There are for instance those like General Chichagov, a Cossack officer, Governor of Vladivostok and the Coast province, who is a fine-mannered, kindly dispositioned, simple-minded soldier, dealing justly in Russian fashion amongst

a heterogeneous mob of nationalities. There is, or rather was, General Gribski, who has been held responsible for the massacre of the Chinese at Blagoveshchensk.

Among the empire builders in St. Petersburg are Mr. de Witte, the Minister of Finance, to whose forward policy effect is given through the Russo-Kitaiski Bank and the Eastern Chinese Railway Company; Baron Friedrichs, whose influence is far-reaching and initiative appreciable; and Prince Ukhtomski, who of late years has been much in evidence as the clever advocate of Russian expansion eastward.

Prince Esper Esperovich Ukhtomski, is a short, dark, well-knit man, of impulsive temperament and considerable energy. He accompanied the Tsar on his memorable voyage when Tsarevich to the Far East in 1890–1891, and has chronicled these travels at great length. The Prince seems to have been impressed by the might of the British Empire as manifested in India, by Singapore, and the settlements in the Far East. He is the most outspoken, the most enthusiastic and daring of the Russian imperialists, and has undertaken various secret negotiations on behalf of the Russian State. He seems also to have had the confidence of Chinese officials and others when acting as mediator. It is true that he has repudiated responsibility for some successes journalists have attributed to him, and he is believed to have schemes of much greater magnitude awaiting the fitting opportunity for their achievement. Personally he likes Englishmen, and admires the imperialism which has made them present masters of their dominions beyond the seas, but he is an active and strenuous opponent of British imperialistic policy, as being absolutely detrimental to the aims and interests of Russia. His widely read paper, the *Peterburgski Viedomosti* attacks British aggression most determinedly. In so far as Russia has political parties, Prince Ukhtomski may be said to voice that section which is intent

upon the absorption of Asia, as opposed to the reform party, whose object is to induce the Government to develop still further the natural wealth of manufacturing, commercial, agricultural, European Russia. Prince Ukhtomski is a member, and probably politically the most important member, of the Eastern Chinese Railway Board.

Before considering the great corporations developing the east for Russia, mention must be made of the all-important but little-known corps of secret agents, which penetrates to the most remote towns of Central Asia, and to the capitals and trading centres of foreign countries east and west. This service is well organised, its members exercising different professions, and, ostensibly engaged in getting money for themselves, are not often discovered or even suspected. In the collection of information, the knowledge that is power, Russia is at present far ahead of Japan, and has brought to a high state of perfection a system of news gathering which the British Government as yet has not even attempted. Then there are the frontier guards, men closely in touch with the secret agents. It is said that the general instruction to those in Asia whose duty it is to inspect the boundary posts, is to look further south for any marks they do not at once find at the spot expected.

The Manchurian lines are being constructed under the general direction of Alex. Ivanovich Yugovich, a son of the south, who, left an orphan at an early age, was befriended by some of the foreign merchants of Odessa. They gave him an education, including a course at King's College, London. Returning to Russia he soon obtained employment on the Southern railway, later was engaged by the Riazan Company, which is admitted to be the best laid, best equipped and staffed railway in the whole Russian Empire. The Riazan line from Moscow to Riajsk, is shorter

RUSSIAN WANDERERS AT A SIBERIAN STATION

A BATHING SCENE

than that by Tula, which is taken in preference by the Siberian express, possibly because the Kursk line is State property.

Chief Engineer Yugovich is a heavy, slow, large-limbed man between fifty and sixty years of age. He is clean-shaven but for the little chin-tuft affected by many of the Manchurian railway staff, a fashion set by Prince Hilkov, the Minister of Ways and Communications, who, by this and other peculiarities adopted during his long residence in the United States, has earned the nickname of the "American." As an engineer the work of Mr. Yugovich has been severely criticised, and his technical capabilities questioned, but as his *métier* is the organisation and direction of an army of workers, the details of construction are relegated to the three sectional engineers. Mr. Yugovich speaks English with fluency, but his sympathies are not with us. From the conversation I had with him I do not think him to be a man of genius or great ability, but just a plain, good-tempered, rather easy-going, shrewd business man with plenty of common sense; a man of ample resource and persuasive manners, likely to get on well with his fellows, and win over the opposition of all but the envious. At the time of the Boxer rising his five constructing parties all got into Russian territory without disaster.

Engineer Nicolas Sviagin has charge of the eastern section, the route for which he surveyed secretly some years before the line was planned. He is a small man, beyond middle age, fairly typical of the persevering, methodical Russian engineer, possessing no great originality. Between the section he constructed and that relegated to Engineer Bocharov there is nothing to choose, and neither is deserving high praise. The southern branch line from Kharbin to Port Arthur has been built under the direction of Mr.

Hirschman, who of all the engineering staff in Manchuria is probably the most aggressive and capable. In 1898 he succeeded in obtaining the concession for the Kiakhta-Kalgan-Pekin line, and is said to have been instrumental in getting the consent of the Dowager Empress to a prolongation of the Manchurian line to Pekin from the east. He is an able negotiator, understands the Chinese character better than his fellows, and has set about the difficult task of Russifying the Feng-Tien province of Manchuria. He has been many times ordered to negotiate directly with Pekin officials, and won many points for Russia on the question of military occupation prior to the Boxer troubles. He is also supposed to have been of service in getting the American financiers to take an interest in Russian bonds to the extent of some fifty million dollars which Wall Street invested when the Russo-Chinese Bank was founded. He has also had much to do with the new free port of Dalny, although its actual construction has been left to Engineer Waldemar-Sakharov.

The railway company has many river boats, including steam ferries on the Sungari and Nonni, with tugs, barges, and passenger craft on the Manchurian rivers and the Amur. Still more daring, it started an ocean fleet, at first with the view of maintaining direct communication with Vladivostok and Port Arthur. This service, which includes calls at Korean and Japanese ports is still the most important, but the fleet has been largely increased, some Atlantic liners and large new Shanghai-built steamers have been added, and regular services now connect Port Arthur with Chinese ports, and, *viâ* Vladivostok, with the trading ports on Sakhalin Island, the ports in the Sea of Okhotsk, and the capital of Kamchatka, whilst further extensions are contemplated as soon as the fleet of eleven ocean-going steamers can be appreciably increased. All the services are run at a loss,

the total reaching many thousand roubles yearly, but communications are maintained, and competition by private lines is almost impossible.

The railway company did not succeed as bankers, for the special notes they issued were not generally accepted as currency, and the simple blue and white tokens are now somewhat rare, their place being taken by the issue through the Russo-Chinese Bank, of 1, 3, and 5 rouble notes no longer current in Russia.

The Eastern Chinese Railway Company has been used by the Russian Ministry of War as the instrument for covertly constructing the secret military strategic railway towards Pekin, for the line is being built by the railway staff as distinct from the military staff to which the extension of the Russian military railway in Central Asia was entrusted. This fact shows how completely a private concern—for the Eastern Chinese railway is regarded as a "foreign-line"—is utilised by the Russian State in advancing its work of empire making.

The Russo-Chinese Bank is the greatest empire builder in the Far East. Nominally a chartered bank doing private business, it is really an instrument of the Ministry of Finance, utilised by him to finance the Eastern Chinese railway, and to develop Manchuria and East Siberia. It is meant to rival the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, but it enjoys a monopoly within Russian territory. No business is too small for its attention, and as the originator and nurse of commercial enterprises in North Asia it has no equal. Its branches are everywhere in the east, in Siberia, Manchuria, and Mongolia. Its nominal capital is eleven and a quarter million roubles, and a deposit of five million taels with the Chinese Imperial Treasury.

At St. Petersburg its board is Russian, but in the east it is cosmopolitan, being staffed largely by foreigners, always

excepting British subjects, and its local directors are all men with great experience either of the Far East or of banking in Western Europe. Mr. v. Groot was formerly an official in the Chinese Maritime customs under Sir Robert Hart, and he is also the promoter of the large international company working the gold mines in Chinese Mongolia, the clean up finding its way *viâ* Maimachin to the Russian mint at Irkutsk. Another high official, Mr. D. D. Pokotilov, is also a director of the Eastern Chinese railway, and like Mr. v. Groot formerly under Sir Robert Hart. He has been able to arrange exceptional treatment for imports by way of Dalny, and was one of the most able and persistent negotiators of different conventions with China favouring Russia in Manchuria. Mr. Morse at Port Arthur, Mr. Maslenikof and Mr. Epstein at Vladivostok, as local directors, are indefatigable in getting fresh enterprises started in their districts, and an examination of their methods will show how helpful the Russian State proves itself towards the industries and commerce it wishes to foster.

Russia may not have the monopoly of mining in Manchuria by treaty, but using this bank as it will use it, no one can mine at a profit in Manchuria unless with the help and connivance of the bank or unless some neutral bank is started, willing and able to give the same liberal terms to venturesome miners as the Russo-Chinese Bank will grant, if met by serious competition. No private bank is likely to risk opposing this State-aided, State-directed organisation in its great work of empire building in the east. On the other hand the bank will attack them in their own strongholds, and already is making itself felt within the British sphere of influence in China.

CHAPTER XVII

MANCHURIA

THE territory which comprises the three eastern provinces of China has an aggregate area of nearly 364,000 square miles. Hai-lung-Kiang, separated from Eastern Siberia by the Argun and Amur rivers, is four times the size of England and has a population estimated at half a million. Kirin, the far eastern province divided by the river Ussuri from Siberia, and separated from Korea by the Long White Mountains, is twice the size of England and has two million inhabitants; and Feng-Tien, the southern district comprising the Liao-Tung peninsula, has an area about 5000 square miles greater than that of England, and a population of about five millions.

Feng-Tien of which Mukhden is the capital, the ancestral domain of the Manchu dynasty, forms the nineteenth province of China, its administration and status having been changed in 1876, whilst Kirin and Hai-lung-Kiang instead of being ranked as Chinese States, are regarded by the Chinese as territories. The difference may be of importance when the occupation or administration of Manchuria by a foreign power has to be settled definitely. The territories alone adjoin the Russian frontier; Feng-Tien province in no way impinges upon Siberia, and the only Russian territory adjoining is the detached naval station of Port Arthur and the land on the Kwan-tung peninsula ceded with it in 1898.

The province in its population, trade, agriculture, and topography, resembles China; the territories possess fewer Chinese characteristics, and more closely resemble Siberia. In describing Manchuria the territories are referred to, but not Feng-Tien, which is regarded as appertaining wholly to China Proper.

Quite apart from its political importance the Russians view their growing influence in Manchuria as distinctly advantageous. In the seventeenth century the Cossack pioneers tried to force their way into Manchuria by the Sungari, but were checked by the Chinese. Muraviev-Amurski had to be content with settlements on the north bank of the Amur, and those were frequently disturbed by the Chinese on the south bank, who also disputed the right of the Russians to navigate the Amur, notwithstanding their treaty rights with China. In fact Manchuria was badly administrated by the Chinese and the inhabitants, mixed natives, turbulent adventurers, and pao-tui-tzi, or fugitives from justice, hated the rulers and tax-gatherers and were constantly rebelling.

After the Chino-Japanese war the Russians, in consideration of their friendly offices, received from China the concession to build a railway across Manchuria from west to east, meeting the then existing Trans-Baikal and Ussuri sections of the Trans-Siberian railway. That granted, the construction of the line by the original route along the Amur to Khabarovsk was indefinitely postponed and has not since been prosecuted. Much was made of the fact that the Manchurian route shortened the line some 500 miles, and will thus lessen the cost of conveying goods from west to east and help the railway in competing with ocean freights to the Far East.

The concession was handed over to the Eastern Chinese Railway Company, incorporated within Manchurian jurisdiction, with Russian shareholders who elect Russians to the

CHINESE ROAD-MAKERS

STREET IN A MANCHURIAN VILLAGE ON THE SUNGARI

Council, or Board, which is presided over by an official appointed by the Chinese Government. The company is financed by the Russo-Chinese Bank, itself an irregular offshoot from the department of the Russian Ministry of Finance. The railway was to be of Russian gauge — five feet — to be commenced in 1897, and, thirty-six years after being opened throughout its entire length to general traffic, might be acquired by the Chinese Government at the cost price, plus interest and debts, but in any case the line is to be exploited by the Company for eighty years and then revert to the Chinese Government.

When the Russians secured the twenty-five years' lease of Port Arthur and the Kwan-tung peninsula, the concession of the Eastern Chinese railway was amended, and leave given to make, subject to the same conditions, a branch line southwards to Port Arthur. Another stipulation of importance is that the Company may impose differential tariffs for or against goods and places.

The Russians, having obtained a footing in Manchuria, are said to have provoked hostilities, to have treated the local governors with insolence, the resident inhabitants with barbarity, and their own native workmen with cruelty.

There is no evidence in proof of these charges. On the contrary there is indisputable testimony that the railway constructing parties were generous in their treatment of Chinese and Mantzi labourers, and it is highly improbable that any were so impolitic as to heap indignities upon officials whether properly appointed or self-constituted.

In the summer of 1900 the Chinese became dictatorial, and a military officer who had been reviewing some thousands of mixed troops near Khailar gave the assistant engineer of the section to understand that railway stations and works could not be proceeded with unless the Chinese authorised each

particular construction. His ultimatum was followed by symptoms of unrest all along the route of the projected line, and a fortnight later hostilities actually commenced at Blagoveshchensk.

The Russian civilians acted wisely, humanely, and with great promptitude. In evacuating the territory there was little panic; the workmen, even the Chinese converts were not abandoned, and one after the other the five separate parties who had been at work in constructing the line were withdrawn to positions of safety. In the west the riot was the most pronounced, the Chinese following the fugitives far into the Russian territory of Dauria in the Trans-Baikal Government.

Then the military conquest of Manchuria was undertaken.

On July 21, the Tsar issued Ukases placing the troops in Siberia and Eastern Turkestan on a war footing. Governor-General Grodekov was Commander-in-Chief and directed the invasion. He cleared the Amur, and on the 28th the Chinese were driven back from their repeated attempts on Blagoveshchensk. Then, almost simultaneously, five divisions entered Manchuria, with Kharbin as their objective. From the west General Orloff with the Trans-Baikal troops marched upon Khailar; from the east the Ussuri Cossacks under General Chichagov advanced upon Ningut. The Siberian regiments under General Rennenkampf attacked Aigun on the Amur, and when that had been taken, and given to the sword and flames after eight hours' fighting, proceeded by Mergen to Tsitsikar. General Sakharov forced his way up the Sungari towards Kharbin, and on the south troops directed by General Linievich and Admiral Alexeiev, were forwarded from Port Arthur to Newchwang, captured that town, advanced on Mukhden, and ultimately proceeded north to Kharbin.

Although in the end all five divisions succeeded, the operations were differently conducted, and the opposition offered

varied in strength and persistence. As was to be expected the greater resistance was encountered in the more densely populated and better administrated province of Feng-Tien. In fact the territories had been conquered before Mukhden was taken, and it was only when the forces from the north joined with those operating from the south that the organised active defence succumbed.

The speediest progress was that made by the river route. General Sakharov attacked Bayan-tun, a few miles from San-Sin, on July 24, carried the fortress and captured five 6-in. Krupp cannon and other artillery. On the 27th he took San-Sin. He met with little opposition beyond, reaching Kharbin on August 3, at the same time as the advance guard of General Chichagov's forces arrived from the east.

The eastern division had landed at Possiet Bay, the apex of the triangle formed by Korea, Siberia, and Manchuria. Its first objective was Ningut, which was easily taken; there were important engagements at Ek-hé and near Aje-Khé, in both of which the Russians were successful and sustained but slight losses. General Chichagov conducted the operations in a praiseworthy manner. His Cossacks were never out of hand, and no stories of excesses committed are current as to the military operations in this portion of the country.

From the west General Orloff crossing the frontier at Tsuru-Khaitsu, about seventy miles to the north-east of Nagadan and the railway, encountered 5000 Chinese under General Kwangdo. He defeated this force, marched upon Khailar and took the town almost without opposition on July 30. It contained large stores of arms, old Mausers and lances, 330 tons of American flour, and 3000 chests of tea. He then advanced into the Khingan Mountains; met near Yakshi some 7000 Chinese and Mongolian troops armed with old Mausers of the 1868 pattern, and routed them. He was many times

attacked, and had to fight his way practically all through the mountain passes. He reached Mendukhé on August 14 and, continuing, hurriedly covered 216 miles in eleven days and joined General Rennenkampf at Tsitsikar on September 1; but the Chinese garrison had fled to Boduné, the Tsiantsiun Shen had poisoned himself; and his son carried away his body and the gold from the treasury. General Orloff, although his bravery and generalship have never been seriously questioned, was not regarded as strong enough for the work expected of him. His treatment of the resident inhabitants was too lenient. He seems to have regarded his instructions critically, and found the orders more severe and the treatment directed more drastic than the circumstances warranted. His despatches are said to have contained recommendations for more lenient measures, and he wished particularly that at least the inoffensive, peaceable inhabitants might be spared.

It may be mentioned that the Chinese Governor of Tsitsikar favoured the Russians, and was, consequently, executed by the Chinese. Shen succeeded him, and got a force of 20,000 well-equipped Chinese and Mongols into the field in a very short time, and met the Russians at Ongum with a force of not less than 10,000 men and some artillery. The Russians returned the artillery fire, and under cover of it the Cossacks advanced and dispersed the Chinese, killing 800, losing only eight killed and eighteen wounded. Shen then ordered Pao, the officer commanding, to poison himself; instead he opposed the Russian advance party, but was killed at Yakshi.

After the arrival of General Sakharov at Kharbin, a force was sent west along the frontier line of the Hai-lung-Kiang territory and Mongolia, to join with those from the west; this effected early in September, a further movement was made to the south.

General Rennenkampf's forces appear to have been most

effectual in clearing the country. Acting with General Gribski, and others, the various river stations on the Amur were first destroyed. Leaving Aigun in flames on August 4, he chased the fleeing Chinese towards Mergen, and drove them left and right; they formed again to oppose his progress at Ayur, and were defeated after the Russians had been reinforced from Blagoveshchensk. The Khingan Pass was reached on August 16, and here a hard battle was fought, for by an out-flanking movement he partly surrounded the Chinese, then, hemmed in between the two divisions and cut off from retreat by the mountains, the slaughter was great. Mergen was taken on the 18th after little opposition, and on the next day the Russians pressed south to Tsitsikar, destroying seventeen villages on the way. From Tsitsikar he followed the Chinese to Boduné and occupied it without opposition.

This short campaign placed territory more than thrice the area of the Transvaal, and between four and six thousand miles from the Russian capital, absolutely at the disposal of the invaders. After the chief operations were concluded, the route of the railway was provided with a strong military guard; a fort was made at Fu-li-ahdé, on the Nonni: Cossack stations, posts, and block-houses were placed at short distances from each other, especially in the Khingan.

There were in hiding about the hills and wilder parts, detachments of the regular Chinese troops and numbers of armed fugitives, Boxers, secret society men, and bandits to be hunted down. This work proceeded as quickly as the troops released from service at the front and in China Proper were available for the purpose, as the Siberian Cossacks had to be disbanded in order that they might harvest their crops and so avert a famine. The hunt continued all through last summer and is not yet finished. Whether or not these isolated troops were entitled to belligerent rights is questionable. It is even doubted

whether Russia and China were actually at war in Manchuria, or whether the Russians were simply quelling an irregular rising. Their treatment of the natives was in some instances extremely barbarous. On capturing a village, or occupying one where there had been no opposition, the residents were made prisoners. It is said that every ninth, or hundredth, man was executed as a warning to others. The Russians from the north, by every means they could devise and their ingenuity suggest, endeavoured to strike terror into the hearts of the Manchurian population. They succeeded. The frightened people fled from their approach, and some have never dared to return to their former houses. The fugitives thus made have been hunted and treated as rebels. On the other hand, where large bodies of Khungus have fought under a known leader and more recently submitted, leaders and followers have been treated with greater leniency, sometimes have even surrendered on terms, for the Russian fury quickly passed when the country to be conquered was actually and effectively occupied. Much depends upon the General, for in 1902 in one engagement only thirty prisoners were taken and hundreds slain, the force engaged numbering some thousands of Russians and about eight hundred of the so-called Khungus.

Manchuria is under Russian rule, and is likely to remain so, although the laws and the executive may be actually or nominally Chinese. For all practical purposes the Manchurian territories may be regarded as the complement of Eastern Siberia, just as Turkestan, Bokhara, and other Central Asian States are complementary to West Siberia. Russia will tighten her hold of the newly acquired country, and now could not, if she would, withdraw from the position she has taken up.

In Feng-Tien province the conditions are not quite the same. The Chinese inhabitants have not been cleared out of the country; it contains the treaty-port of Newchwang;

foreign nations are more immediately and largely interested in exploiting the trade and natural resources of the country; other nations have concessions, foreign railways and banks actually exist there, and Russia cannot claim the monopoly, nor yet obtain a free hand in the south like she has in the north.

The south, with its greater trade and wealth, and its open ports, is what Russia now needs. By various means she is attempting to acquire the south. In the first place, in the treaty-port of Newchwang — which Russia stormed and took, therefore actually acquired by conquest — the harbour is silting, and facilities for handling goods on shore are inadequate to the trade to be done. The Imperial Chinese and European Governments have neglected to make the improvements local traders required. Russia is spending money in order to increase the trade of the port. On the other hand, Russia is not helping the extension of the Newchwang railway, but is endeavouring to cripple that enterprise. At the first opportunity she will acquire the concession by purchase or otherwise. In the event of certain possible happenings Newchwang will become, if not a terminus, at least a chief port on the Trans-Siberian railway system. The acquisition of the Newchwang railway would make Pekin the terminus. At the present moment the occupation and fortification of Tientsin by the Germans seems the most formidable obstacle to the realisation of that plan. Should Russia not succeed in that direction the most will be made of the Port Arthur line. The Kwan-tung peninsula can be effectively fortified, and Port Arthur is already a formidable naval base, and one that may be and shortly will be rendered practically impregnable. It is an ice-free port. Twenty miles to the north-west is the large open bay and shipping port of Talienwan, the whole of it within the territory leased to, or acquired by, Russia. This port, renamed Dalny, Russia in-

tends to make the commercial emporium of the east — a rival to Shanghai in so far as its position secures the trade of wealthy territory and the littoral of the Korean Gulf.

Dalny provides a safe anchorage for shipping, is protected by Port Arthur, served by the Eastern Chinese railway, and so can be made to fill Russia's needs in Manchuria and the Far East if her ambitious schemes fail. It is a place with respect to which many promises are made. It is now to be a free port — and as such is attracting from Vladivostok the foreign import merchants whose trade has been ruined by the closing of that port to free trade. It offers other advantages. Ships drawing thirty feet can enter at any time and without pilots, and be protected from the roughest seas by efficient breakwaters. Goods may be transhipped, or loaded on to the railway trucks on the quay side. There will be no custom house, no bond dues; harbour dues, wharfage rates, and warehouse charges will be lower than elsewhere in the east, and the Japanese method will be followed generally. There will be an abundance of cheap coolie labour. There is a rise and fall of twelve feet on the average tide, and vessels will lie alongside piers, of which five are projected, varying in width from sixty to three hundred feet, and from a quarter to half a mile in length. Coasting and native craft will be accommodated at special landing places near the Chinese quarter of the town. Two dry docks, one large enough for the biggest vessel afloat, are being constructed, and Glasgow dredgers' are in use for deepening and maintaining the harbour.

The picture is made more attractive by the announcement that people of all nationalities may acquire and hold land on the same terms, and even participate in the municipal government. The city is to be managed by a council elected by the ratepayers, of which two members must be Russians

AT A COSSACK POST ON THE AMUR

and not more than two may be Japanese or Chinese, an arrangement which ensures representation to any large foreign element, while at the same time it prevents domination by either of the two neighbouring nationalities. Dalny will be the only place under Russian control, say the Russian authorities, whence no resident may be deported. All Governments will be invited to establish Consulates, and land will be assigned in a convenient locality to those Governments which do so.

The plan of the city divides it into several sections. The administrative section so called, will contain the Government buildings, hotels, churches, schools, theatres, and clubs — many of these establishments being already under way; also the railway shops for construction and repairs, steamship construction and repair shops, the steamship and railroad offices and the homes of employés and workmen. Behind the administrative section — which is laid out on the peninsula — lies the wholesale quarter for the great warehouses and godowns. This also adjoins the water front. On the other side of the administrative section will be the retail and the general mercantile district, and beyond this, on the hillside commanding a view of the bay, the foreign residential section. The Chinese city is separate. Three miles from the foreign settlement is a splendid beach, which will be occupied as a summer resort, and to which a road is being constructed. Electric lights are already provided and an extensive tramway system is under construction. Pavements are being laid in the principal streets, and the grading of streets and of ground for building is being carried on by thousands of workmen. Ample open spaces have been reserved, and on the hill above the foreign settlement is an extensive nursery and green-house establishment for propagating plants and trees for the streets and parks, with some acres already under cultivation.

While purchases of large pieces of land for manufacturing or business purposes may be made directly from the railroad corporation, most of the building lots will be sold at auction to the highest bidders.

In 1901 Dalny was little more than a collection of *fantsas* and rough godowns, with the litter of harbour and dock works in progress. About a million and a quarter sterling are being expended upon the present works, including one of the five proposed piers and warehouse blocks. Twice as much will be paid out as soon as needed, and already about 25,000 coolies are employed upon the works. The Eastern Chinese railway owns twenty steamers, — some old Atlantic liners, others small light draught vessels built in Europe or Shanghai, — and these maintain communication between Dalny, Vladivostok, and all the seaports of the north from Petropavlovsk in Kamchatka to Nagasaki and Shanghai. It is to Dalny that the ocean liners in connection with the North Pacific and Canadian Pacific railways are to be attracted. Such is the bid Russia now makes — on paper — to secure a share in the trade of the Far East.

In the territories through which the Eastern Chinese line runs as a continuation of the Trans-Siberian railway, the country is similar to Siberia and is regarded as is the land contiguous to the railway on Russian territory suitable for settlements of agricultural peasants, and these are already occupying the country, both as squatters, and on terms arranged with the railway and military officers.

The mineral resources of Manchuria are considerable and their exploitation may yet provoke war between Russia and some other power than China. Russia wishes and intends to secure the mining monopoly. In order to make her regulations binding she is putting pressure upon the Chinese Government to confer such privileges as will make Russia's procedure

regular. It is to the interest of Russia that she should obtain this concession; it is to the interest of all other nations that she should not. Actually Russia will direct and control mining operations, but Japan, England, and the United States of America are interested particularly in keeping open Manchuria not only as a market for their goods but as a field in which their subjects may find profitable employment for their energy and capital.

The mineral wealth has not been ascertained, since prospecting has been carried on with extreme difficulty, and mining, as opposed to Chinese religious opinion, forbidden generally and permitted only in a few instances. Clandestine mining, particularly working for gold and silver, has been practised more or less in all mountainous districts for generations past. The Chinese officials themselves dared scarcely venture into the wild regions occupied by the lawless adventurers. When sent on a mission there, they proceeded only so far as they deemed it safe to go, and that depended upon the military force at their disposal. Accepting the inevitable, and exacting such tribute as they could from the unfortunate people with whom they came into contact during the journey, they returned and reported that everything had been found satisfactory and in the same state as mentioned in earlier reports. This was particularly the case in the Northern Khingan district, and in the Royal Game Preserve or Imperial Sporting Park adjoining the Korean frontier. Independent communities of gold-diggers, hunters of ginseng, and the wild nomad graziers, trappers, and traders flourished untaxed, and to the authorities unknown. Some of these communities, harmless in themselves, are being hunted out of the country and exterminated by the Russians, just as the Chinese gold-diggers of Askold and the South Ussuri province were treated, when these lands came into Russian occupation.

Northern Manchuria was an asylum for escaped convicts and exiles from Siberia. About twenty years ago a number of these formed a republic in the "New California" gold region up the Jeltunga valley. The stream runs into the Amur opposite Albazin, but the headquarters of this free colony were a few miles south of Ignashina, below the junction of the Shilka and Amur, and behind the old Chinese military post of Mokhé destroyed by General Gribski's force in July, 1900.

The existence of this new El Dorado was known in all convict settlements east of Baikal, and thither rushed all who could escape the vigilance of the prison guards. The gold-dust, or rather grain, was offered to travellers and traders at very low prices, but the vendors or their accomplices, knowing that the possession of free gold was a penal offence, not unfrequently regained possession of the gold so sold by threatening to denounce the purchaser to the authorities.

This community became so wealthy that one year it purchased all the stocks of weapons and ammunition on sale at Blagoveshchensk, and thus the Governor of the Amur province became aware of a real danger threatening the Russian settlements. He sent an emissary to the republic over the river, a needy official who treated the rulers of the unrecognised colony with such condescension that he was made especially welcome, loaded with gifts, and instructed to report favourably of the community to the Governor, otherwise he would be treated as the members of the republic treated their enemies. He could not give sufficient guarantee of his good faith, so the colonists took back from him all he had, gave him instead twenty-five lashes, put him over the Amur, and left him there without as much as a copeek in his pocket. Ultimately he reached Blagoveshchensk, and reported that this free colony was a regularly organised republic of

some 3000 persons all armed. It was openly engaged in gold mining and trading in uncoined gold; it paid no heed to Russian authority, nor did it heed the Chinese, upon whose territory it was situated. It had a prejudicial influence upon loyal Russians in the Amur territory; it sold them gold, and used the Government telegraph freely and openly in its transactions, gold for this purpose going by the name of "meal" or "flour." It also held a large section of the Imperial post-road in terror, and dealt in illicit gold with travellers. It had as president a certain South Russian, known as Vassi, who had been a clerk in Odessa and Blagoveshchensk, and was elected. His power was wielded according to his view of the wishes of the majority as expressed in the public assembly.

The Governor, Baron Korff, determined to extirpate this republic in the "New California," so sent as special emissary a tactful diplomat who by flattery was to inveigle the president and ringleaders into Russian territory and there arrest them. Vassi did not readily fall into the trap, but the emissary was so graceful and pressing that at last the President crossed the Amur to confer with the Russians as to the future of his colony. He and his guards then disappeared — the Russian Government alone knows what became of them. Then, so that knowledge of the colony should not be talked about by the military gossips of St. Petersburg, Baron Korff induced the Chinese to disperse the remaining members of the little republic. That was the end of the Jeltunga Brotherhood as a separate republic, but the members who escaped the Chinese soldiers formed groups here and there about the territory; these were added to at different times, but there was no organisation foreign to that of the Chinese bands in their locality, and they took more and more to Chinese ways until they lost even their natural characteristics.

Possibly the native gold-seekers have gathered much more of the precious metal in Manchuria than is generally credited, even exhausted some of the alluvial deposits in the little frequented valleys, and as there has been no competent geological survey of the country it would be unwise to assume that the country is very rich in this particular. At present it is the policy of the Russian Government to regard Manchuria as being in a state of war and closed to foreigners, except in such named localities, as Dalny, set apart for them. When Russia has ascertained what Manchuria really has in the way of mineral wealth, and, if possible, has secured also the sole legal right to mine, then foreign capital will be invited on terms unlikely to be more favourable than those offered in respect to the exploitation of Siberia. Until this stock-taking and acquisition of monopolies has been accomplished, the adventurous foreigner is not going to be made welcome in Manchuria. The railway authorities, when the line is finished and open to regular traffic, may want freights and be ready to encourage commerce and traders. That date may be postponed indefinitely; until such time as in the opinion of the military authorities it is safe for Russia to admit foreign settlers to enter the country. In 1901 preference was shown to certain classes of people — by no means the most respectable — and others excluded. By right of occupation the Russians have jurisdiction; they exact a Russian passport and do not recognise a Chinese one. The Russian authorities, when asked for permission to enter the country, grant it or not as they please. It depends upon who and what the applicant is.

The missionaries Russia will not have: the land is to be reserved for the proselytism of the orthodox Church. Russian places of worship have been erected in different towns, existing buildings have been converted into orthodox chapels, and Manchuria is to have its own Bishop, Innocent, Archiman-

drite of Pekin, having been already nominated for the post. Of the many European missionaries driven out of the country during the war, only one, Dr. Greig, of the Medical Mission, returned, and he had practically to force his way across the frontier, and is leaving the country in 1902.

The Japanese are not encouraged, indeed, they have been rigorously excluded, and are suspected of carrying on an illegal traffic in arms by way of the Korean frontier. They and the English alone have been excluded because of their nationality solely. And in 1901, when free access to the territories was given to other nationalities, it was refused repeatedly to Britons and Japanese by the local authorities, and also when application was made by the accredited Ambassador to the proper authorities in St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER XVIII

IN DISGUISE THROUGH MANCHURIA

ONLY Englishmen need to disguise themselves if they are to pass through Manchuria during the occupation of the country by the Russians. The year after the Boxer rising there was a rush of Russian subjects to Manchuria; the authorities encouraged this immigration. For political purposes it was thought advantageous to have as many Russians resident in the temporarily occupied province as possible; at the same time it was deemed expedient to exclude Englishmen and Japanese. In crossing Siberia quite half the passengers journeying east with me meant to reach Manchuria, and across the frontier men and women of almost every race were allowed to pass without hindrance.

To be passed into the territory one of two things was necessary: the fiat of the military authority, or a frank by some official of the Eastern Chinese railway over the railway line in course of construction. English and Japanese could not obtain either. For people of other nationalities there were no real difficulties; to them, or for them, the railway pass was quickly granted, and whenever I mentioned my difficulties to any one in Siberia the immediate exclamation was, "Then you must be an Englishman." All knew that the English were not granted facilities to enter Manchuria, and that as far as possible they were excluded. It was not easy to get an absolute refusal for permission to enter the country from any military official;

NATIVE RESTAURANT IN A MANCHURIAN VILLAGE

A STATION IN MONGOLIA

the usual reply being that the individual to whom application was made had no power to grant the request; and this whether Manchuria was to be entered from east or west, north or south. The officials played into each other's hands, and avoided being directly discourteous by granting permission to certain people to go as far as some particular jurisdiction extended; then on pushing further, the intruder was met by the officers of the commander of another section, who could not regard as valid for their section the permission given by the Commandant in authority elsewhere. Altogether the method practised here was effectual; it is instanced because there is no doubt that wherever and whenever the English attempt to trade in Manchuria similar plans will be used to hamper their activity.

There is no English Consul in Siberia, but in Vladivostok alone there are official representatives of Germany, France, Holland, Belgium, Sweden and Norway, and other countries. The United States of America in Consul R. T. Greener has a commercial agent of splendid energy and wonderful resource. It is quite possible that an official representative of Great Britain if stationed at Vladivostok would be as impotent as her representatives at St. Petersburg to obtain for British subjects the same privileges as Russia grants to Americans and other foreigners with reference to Manchuria; but even if this were the case, the appointment of a consular agent conversant with British Colonial trade would be a matter of incalculable value to Imperial interests on the Pacific.

In Vladivostok were Russian, French, German, and American commercial travellers, and others, who had passed through Manchuria. I saw on their way thither Russian peasants in top-boots and mujiks in bast-shoes; tweed-coated clerks, shopmen, and tourists, real gypsies in faded fancy costumes; the wives of Russian officers in European gowns, American girls in sailor hats and shirt-waists, bare-footed village women, and

maids from Little Russia swathed in pleated shawls. I saw too an English officer who had been turned out of Manchuria; journalists who had been unsuccessful; and I knew that one, after gaining the heart of Manchuria, had been discovered and conducted from Kharbin to the frontier by the Russian military authorities. The unfair treatment of the English disgusted me, and I determined to get through Manchuria by any means I could devise. Unfortunately by my persistence in applying for the permits necessary for formal admission to the territory I had made myself a figure well known, not only in Vladivostok but at other points of departure on the recognised routes by rail and river into the disputed country. Now, from the minor officials I could not beg, buy, or cheat any paper whatever, try how I would. Nor were those persons whom I persuaded to act for me more successful.

I had received a circular letter of introduction to fellow-members of the Anglo-Russian Literary Society resident in Siberia. That letter was of more value to me than many passports, and all official recommendations. Russians are proverbially hospitable, and these Russians were favourably disposed to England. They never failed to do all that they could, and sometimes did more than they ought, to forward my interests. For instance, it was from them I obtained an introduction to Chief Engineer Yugovich, who is practically the uncrowned king of Manchuria, but from him I could not get even a railway pass. He would not stretch a point for me, for common friends and old acquaintances, but simply referred me to the Governor-General at Khabarovsk, two days distant by rail.

Governor-General Grodekov received me affably — he thought I was an American, said that he had heard of me, affected an interest in my work, and said that if I had any paper that showed what it was I wanted to do, it would

save him taking a long note. I had that paper, an open letter of introduction from some members of the Anglo-Russian Society to an engineer in Manchuria. He borrowed it, promising it should be returned that same day, and I left expecting that the long-tried-for permit would come at last. Instead, I received the letter back, and scribbled upon the reverse of my own card was a curt refusal. He could not sanction my proposed journey through Manchuria. I returned to Vladivostok. There I learned, but not from them, that the signatories to the letter had received a telegram from the Governor-General directing them to attend to their own business, and not concern themselves with foreigners who wished to go into Manchuria.

It was then I resolved to obtain false papers, adopt a disguise, and attempt to sneak through the territory which Russians had closed to Englishmen only. By doing this I placed myself outside the pale, and forfeited all rights to protection from the British Government in the event of my identity being discovered. There was not any real risk of ill usage at the hands of the Russians, that I knew. If detected, I should have been turned out of Manchuria and refused permission to re-enter Russian territory. At least, detection meant the absolute failure of the scheme, for there would be no opportunity accorded for a second attempt. So I left suddenly in a guise which none suspected, and at a time when local acquaintances believed me to be awaiting official help.

The Manchurian frontier is a day's journey by rail from Vladivostok, and on the way there I made the acquaintance of two fellow-travellers likely to be of use in crossing.

The first was the wife of a working engineer on the line, the other an elderly Russian who was starting a mineral water manufactory near Kharbin. These were the only civilian passengers who had been in Manchuria before, and both had first-class passes for the Manchurian train. The gentleman

offered to look after the lady's baggage, also after mine, when we reached the terminus at Grodekov, and this left me free to hide from the frontier guards.

The other passengers were Russians seeking fortune in the new territory, which all believe to be a veritable El Dorado, or were artisans and labourers engaged to work upon the railway. The remainder, by far the largest number, were soldiers on their way to reinforce the expedition against the bandits on the frontier.

Before the Russian occupation, Manchuria was overrun with Chinese squatters, unlicensed gold-diggers, free community men, and robber bands. Russian troops have been busily engaged capturing these men. Some bands they have exterminated; others they have taken and settled on reserved land, after executing the leaders. Some have been driven from the country, some are still hiding in the mountains, and at this particular date a band had suddenly appeared on Russian territory within a few miles of Vladivostok, and were being surrounded by quite an army of Russian troops.

Manchuria is like Siberia in one respect — the ready liar is met everywhere. Siberians are as inquisitive as Chinese or children, and lying as they practise it is neither a sin nor a deceit. It is merely a pastime. Every one would like to know every one else's business but does not care to tell his own, and he talks to please himself or gratify listeners. In the Far East one must believe only what one sees.

The run from Nikolskoe-Ussuri was made at a very slow pace over flat uninteresting country, and we were shunted on a siding for the passage of a long, heavily-laden military train, carrying an artillery regiment, with its field pieces, machine guns, limbers, ammunition waggons, horses, and 200 infantry, so it became dusk before we reached the station of Grodekov, named after the empire-maker in the east.

We supped in the buffet, amongst as strange a company as any I met in Siberia. A Chinese official, taciturn, reserved, and sad, very politely attended by some Russian army officers for whom he showed not the least interest. There was a very tall, stout, clean-shaven man with long fair hair turning gray hanging about his neck and over his ears. He was quite deaf, and talked loudly and incessantly to a group of women and civilians gathered round him. He had been a political exile and was now a free-command who had visited Manchuria and hoped to settle there — that at least was the intention he expressed. A brewer, about to commence business near Imempo, was sampling all the bottled ales the buffet stocked, and criticising all in a most outspoken fashion. In a corner, seated on his luggage, a violinist, short, round-shouldered, long-haired, and his eyes hidden behind blue-goggles. Notwithstanding his earnest endeavours to keep himself very much apart he, his fiddle, or his baggage was always in some one's way, and nearly everybody seemed anxious to engage him in conversation. Cossack officers entered, stared at the company, spoke now to one, then to some other, and withdrew to appear again in a few seconds and ask fresh unimportant questions. Women and children crowded upon each other; the men stood up with their backs to the wall, smoked, laughed, and talked incessantly. The waiters knew not whom to serve or from whom to receive. The hubbub continued for an hour; the room was like a furnace, steam covered the window panes, and a mujik came with wood and heaped more on the fire in the stove. The ladies fanned themselves, but none ventured to stop the man. Then, at last, the station bell rang, and men gripped their luggage, hurried to the door and blocked the passage and porch; in ten minutes all were out struggling for places in the train.

Fresh troubles began. At Pereval the train consisted of a

guard's van and a few open trucks. On one of these our baggage was piled, and upon this, with other favoured ones I clambered, having what was called a "ladies' place." The other passengers got where they could, some standing on the buffers between the trucks and holding on for dear life while we shunted back and forth by the zigzag line leading from the valley to the higher plateau of Manchuria. At Pogranichnaia, on the higher level, this train was cleared. The passengers waited there for a couple of hours for another to be made up, for the journey west into Manchuria by way of Siao-Sui-Fun. The station was a miserable building amid railway sidings, with only a rough outline of the space intended for the construction of a platform. Among the goods piled near the line it was easy to remain unobserved in the darkness until the train was ready to start. At the last moment, with the assistance of a brakesman, I got up into a covered waggon and made myself as comfortable as I could upon a heap of some one else's luggage. By feigning sleep when the conductor came for tickets I escaped his immediate attention, and the next morning a little condescension on my part, and the gift of a rouble, stayed further questioning.

The country is hilly, not mountainous as far as Muren, having the same characteristics as the eastern slope of the ridge except that the trees grow to a much larger size. Before reaching Tai-ma-go, or "Whip-the-Horse" Pass, the actual line is to take a high level route to the entrance of the tunnel about 300 yards in length, now being made by Italian and other foreign workmen. The construction trains take the temporary line on the opposite side of the valley for a distance, then zigzag down the southern side of the ridge and round a spur of the hills to Modashi.

We had to change trains every few hours, and it was not long before I saw the train cleared of passengers unprovided

with tickets. Those who would not get off when told were pushed or kicked off by the conductors and brakesmen. The Chinese were most pertinacious, and as Chinamen appear to be very much like each other and some had tickets while others had not, those thrown off the trucks clambered on again as soon as the conductor left, only to be thrown off again if observed. One would succeed where the dozen failed. Those left behind ran after the train; some caught it at the next stopping-place and boarded it, there to meet with the same fate as before, or, perchance to be the lucky ones who escaped notice.

The quickest and most effectual way of clearing the train was to employ some of the Cossack guards armed with the short, heavy flails they call whips, or a yard of telegraph wire. The brakesmen and conductors accompanied the Cossacks to point out to them the passengers who had not satisfied them of their right to travel. They also generally carried a short length of wire with which to persuade the passengers to leave the truck.

A pass did not necessarily give one the right to travel by a particular train. It had to be submitted to the person in charge of the depot where the train was made up, and countersigned by him before it was valid. He never failed to sign a document given by a Chief Engineer, but as I never had a railway pass at all, the vagaries of the stationmasters did not worry me.

Beating one's way as a vagrant was wearisome work. My luggage — consisting of a large Chinese parchment-covered box, in which my English portmanteau and bag were packed, a Chinese basket of provisions, with the always needed tea-kettle tied thereto, and a roll of Mongolian felt in which to sleep — would be carried to the line by coolies and left there until a train was made up. Usually this consisted of from a

dozen to forty open trucks fully loaded with rails, sleepers, railway material, and provisions. The trains mostly started at dark and ran through the night, to be broken up and rearranged at the first siding reached after dawn broke. The first thing to do was to find a possible place on one of the trucks, then, when no one was looking, to carry my box there, fetch the other luggage, and if I got all on to the truck without being discovered in the act, subsequent proceedings were simple and generally successful.

Having hidden on the truck and made yourself as small as possible, you were invariably found by one of the brakesmen. If no one was looking, and you were almost inconspicuous, the gift of a rouble note would close his eyes to your presence. When there was any risk of the stationmaster noticing your presence, you took the risk, and kept the money until the train was out in the wilds, when the brakesman would visit you in a friendly way.

Occasionally brakesmen and the depot hands would unite to thwart irregular passengers, and as the stationmasters all have a guard of Cossacks at their service, resistance is useless. In those cases I found it best to obey. I would remain as near the train as I could, probably by one of the fires the vagabond travellers light everywhere to boil their kettles. When the guards had passed I would lift my luggage back on to a truck, conceal it there if possible, and wait for the train to start. I would then jump on as the train was moving, and find a hiding-place for myself. The fire-box of a locomotive boiler on its way to Tsitsikar housed me comfortably for two nights.

I never saw any one thrown from a truck while the train was in motion; but sometimes Cossacks would clear a waggon at the last minute and detain would-be passengers, while allowing their effects to go on. This never happened to me. In

MANTZI LABOURERS NEAR FU-LI-AHDÉ

fact, I soon became so used to "beating" my way that I practised it without the least trepidation or hesitation. The man who has a ready tongue and knows how to use it need not fear anything in Manchuria where Russians are, providing he is able to keep his temper. The circumstances occasionally are very trying even to the best-natured people.

A brakesman with a yard of wire in his hand and by his side a fierce-looking Kubanski Cossack armed with rifle and whip asked me rudely if I had a ticket. "Yes." "Where to?" I named a station hundreds of versts ahead. "Let me see it." "The conductor has seen it, isn't that enough?" "Show me your ticket, if you have one," he asked savagely. I doubted the fellow could read, so pulled out a receipt for duty from a custom-house in Poland. It was a paper of the same size and shape as the railway passes. As I surmised, he could not read. But he knew the dragon seal of the Eastern Chinese Railway Company, and that signature was missing from the paper I showed. "That's no ticket," he said, brusque still. "I do not understand," and I shrugged my shoulders. "You will understand later." "All right," said I; "bring the conductor here." But he did not. It was a game of bluff all through. Once, when forced to produce a paper of some sort, I showed a letter with an undecipherable signature, "What is this?" asked the man. "You see what it is," I answered. "It is not enough, any way. It is nothing to do with the railway." I snatched the paper back and asked angrily, "What is your name? Who are you, who say this is not enough?" He was taken aback. "Well, see the stationmaster!" he said hesitatingly. I retorted quickly. "Please! Please come now." "Later. Maybe it's enough," he said more good-humouredly, and he went away hastily. I turned towards the bystanders for approval. They sneered at the man, and condemned his interference, for everywhere and in everything

the sympathy of the public is with the individual whenever he is in conflict with a Russian official of any kind. The officials all know this, and do their utmost to avoid a demonstration, whether they are near the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg or away in the wilds of the mountains of Manchuria.

The officers certainly are not always deceived by the stories told them. A captain of Cossacks came to me at one of the stations and asked where some antelope we had on the truck had been shot. I told him where they had been put on the train, and to whom they belonged. He talked on a little about the shooting they had in that district, where game from pheasants to stags is plentiful, then said suddenly, "I know from the way you talk you are not a Russian. What are you?" "Hungarian." "Where from?" "Carpathian Mountains." "Where are you going?" "To the tunnel at Bakhtu." "To work there?" "I hope so." "For whom?" "Sub-Contractor Goobian." "Goobian? There is no one there of that name; I know all the people there." "Then I must try some one else." He turned away with a smile. He knew that I meant nothing of the kind, but he understood that I had sufficient intelligence to take care of myself. I saw him again after we had passed Bakhtu; he came and made one of a party questioning me; I was telling them that I was an American-German, and explaining in what particulars Chicago was superior to New York. Luckily none of us had ever been in either town. He recognised me and listened with twinkling eyes. Perhaps he had forgotten the story I told him, one hears so many out there.

To move about without attracting attention I dressed like most of the civilians I saw in Kharbin, and about the railway. Top-boots, with baggy black trousers stuck therein, a peaked Cossack cap, and a linen tunic or a leather jacket,

according to the weather. On one of the few occasions when I was lucky enough to get a covered waggon, I was disturbed in the middle of the night by the entrance of a number of the Cossack guards, who tumbled over me as I lay asleep rolled up in my square of felt. They were not quite sober, and by-and-by in came a captain and questioned the Uriadnik of the guard as to a soldier missing from Modashi, and suspected of desertion.

There were several vagrant passengers — Russian, Chinese, and nondescript — in the waggon, and they examined them closely. At last they came to me, who feigned to be asleep. One of the Cossacks pulled away the felt rug and rubbed my ear roughly with his palm — the most effectual way of rousing a drowsy man. One has to use Russian Kiplingese when talking to Cossacks. "Devil skin you, you deformed cur! What is it?" I asked. "W-what is y-your surname?" "Starudubstov." "W-what y-you c-call y-yourself?" "Vasili Vasilievich." "Y-you were in Modashi." "I was." "Y-you belonged t-third r-regi—" "Not that, or any other. A stonemason I, not a soldier." "Where from?" "Caucasus." "C-come with us." "Go to nicky, you blank, blank, blanked blanks! I'm going to sleep." "He talks like our man," stuttered one. "He isn't," called a deep bass from a dark corner; "he has come with us all the way from Zatun." Then one of the men with very unsteady hand held a candle a few inches from my face, and the captain, lurching badly, peered closely into my eyes and breathed vodka into my mouth, and none too soon concluded that he did not recognise me.

It was from a covered waggon, where a few had been allowed to shelter one bitter cold night, that we were summarily ejected into a blizzard at about 1.30 A.M. in a mountain pass some miles from Yal. There was about an inch of snow on the frozen ground; it was sleeting fast, and there seemed to

be no habitation near. The train went on. We piled our baggage together, got on the lee side of the heap, and tried to prevent the smaller packages blowing away, but all lost something. From the spare sleepers we got enough wood to start a fire, and round that we huddled until morning. At daylight two of the party went in search of a workers' camp by the railway, and returned with a horse and very rough telega. We loaded up the luggage and started off over the mountains to find a train bound west.

The first train we saw was testing a temporary bridge over a mountain stream — a job that might last days, and we went on. In the hill were Mongol herdsmen with flocks of sheep and goats, and some troops of small rough ponies. These nomads had no fire. There were no huts or yurtas anywhere to be seen, and none of the Mongols had any comforts to offer us. We went down into the plain and found a rough dwelling half in the ground, very much like a huge potato-bury, tenanted by two Russian families. They were two squatters in the new territory, but were moving before winter to a fresh location nearer the railway.

In another valley a hundred mounted Cossacks were reconnoitring, for the outlawed Khungus had recently been seen in the neighbourhood. Some miles further on we came to a hill-slope, on which there had been a fight between the Russian troops and some natives. The carcasses of ponies, bullocks, and sheep had attracted wolves and many crows, but we jogged on for hours without seeing a human being.

Then we passed a military post, where ten men led a solitary life in a spotlessly clean felt yurta, and were visited once a week, or oftener, by the Cossack patrol, and relieved every six months. We turned again towards the railway and found a new Russian settlement of peasants close to a large Cossack encampment. All were busy putting up wattle-and-daub dwell-

ings for the winter, provisions — meat and fish — were brought in by the Mongols, and found ready purchasers.

There was a train here, but it had run off the line and damaged the track seriously. At last we found another of about fifty empty waggons going west. It ran over rolling prairie where the dried bent grass had been fired, and all was as black as the Chinese towns the Russians razed. The same night the train ran off the line again. No one was hurt, but the delay was considerable, so I gave my luggage into the charge of a fellow-passenger and walked off with some coolies into the nearest town.

There was no difficulty in leaving the train at any place desired, but in some of the settlements there were too few people, other than officers and soldiers, to permit of a sojourn for any length of time without risking identification.

Modashi, 127 miles from the frontier, was the first settlement of importance reached, and there I broke my journey.

It is a prettily situated little town, already quite Russian, with a population of 2000 or more. It is the nearest point to Ningut touched by the line, but near by is the beginning of a branch railway which will be continued as a strategic military line towards the frontier of Korea.

A stream, just a clear, bright mountain torrent some thirty feet in width, runs through the village, and the wood-planked sidewalks are carried on piles, being several feet above the level of the roadways, sufficient evidence of floods in early summer and autumn.

At Khanta-kheza the only Chinese in the neighbourhood were Mantzi labourers on the line, which here runs through thick forest, for which, up to that time, there had been no clearance made for the actual track, the route of which was staked out, and a temporary line skirting a swamp had been laid down to give through communication with the sections laid to Kharbin.

It rained when I left Khanta-kheza, and I rode in a covered waggon on the top of some cement barrels, and soon some Chinese from the open trucks wished to join the company of Russians under the shelter. These repulsed all quite brutally, until one of the heathen, more astute than his companions, opened his sack and produced a handful of hazel-nuts. "More! more!" shouted the Russians, and stretching out their hands they gripped him firmly and hauled him into the waggon. He distributed nuts impartially, then called to some of his fellows; room was made for them, on the same terms, until the Chinaman's nuts had all been taken and the waggon could not accommodate another passenger.

Near Kaolinza, the train again reached the permanent way. At Shito-kheza, there was once an important native village, but the fantsas are now deserted and crumbling; near by a Russian settlement has come into existence. Part of the journey is across marsh, part across rough prairie-like land with brushwood and scrub, and part through woodlands. Game is plentiful, and plump, well-roasted young pheasants were offered by Russian women at the sidings, the average price being sixpence.

So far from the railway being completed, even in this section, it seems scarcely to have been commenced. In places the track, an embankment raised perhaps three feet from the level of the prairie, stops short. There is a bog or swamp in which the bank, if ever it was made, has sunk completely from view and its place is taken by rushes, reeds, and grass many feet high, but in no way distinguishable from that to right and left of the track. As far as one could judge, the constructors upon meeting this difficulty desisted. The line in use leaves the track a few hundred yards before the abrupt termination, descends to the level of the plain and runs over sleepers just laid loosely upon scarcely levelled

RUSSIAN SQUATTERS IN MANCHURIA

THE KHINGAN TUNNEL

ground, and makes a wide detour to right or left of the swamp, as the shorter way may be, then it turns in again and after a time reaches the made way, and ascends to that level.

Nowhere throughout the whole length from east to west did I notice any traces of damage actually wrought to the track or permanent way. The Boxers or Khungus must certainly have interrupted the work, but of the actual material damage they are said to have wrought I could find not a particle of evidence. Possibly some of the bridges were wrecked. If so, they were of a temporary character, pile and trestle erections soon replaced. Wherever large girder or other bridges have to be built over important rivers, as the Khurkha, Sungari, Nonni, Yal, and Unur, not only has the work never been completed, but the embankments have not been raised to the level required. There are ready stone piers for girder bridges, and not far from Imempo there is a bridge wholly of masonry in course of construction, but at the time of passing the arches had not been turned.

Some other points may be mentioned. One track — approximately parallel to that in actual use — appears to have been raised and then for some reason abandoned. There are detached lengths of this disused track in various districts, and they appear never to have been laid with sleepers and were covered with vegetable growth two summers old. In two places in the west the line bifurcated to the south — probably for strategic purposes. The existing water conduits under the used embankments consist of tubes made by riveting together a few lengths of corrugated sheet iron of 28 B.W.G. in thickness, to form tubes 28 inches or more in diameter — they were a favourable hiding and sleeping place — and if intended for permanent use will quickly rust and decay. They are employed in such situations as any ordinary railway

would provide with a culvert of masonry, or earthenware pipes. Being so near the surface it seemed that they could not support the heavy engines and metal-laden waggons run over them. There has been lavish expenditure of capital in constructing the embankment, getting out foundations for the walls of stations, engine sheds, and sinking wells for the water towers, but worst of all there has been an enormous waste of material. Coils of telegraph wire could be seen lying at the bottom of clear mountain streams; crock insulators, both broken and sound, lay scattered about the tracks; dog-nails, nuts-and-bolts, and small metal goods were scattered all over the ground by the side of the track. As these were not yet rusted, this could not have been the work of Boxers or Khungus, or indeed any but those employed upon or about the line. Cases of small screws, spikes, and the like, got broken and the contents were quickly lost. If any one wished to make a trivet for his kettle over the fire one could pick up anywhere good new spikes in any number for the purpose. At an old Chinese labourers' camp, railway small wares had been used for all sorts of purposes and were left now useless, rusting in the earth, or buried. Whether properly constructed or not the Eastern Chinese railway has been built regardless of all expense and with shameful waste of material.

The methods of construction are primitive. The track is staked out; then the stakes are cut off to the level it is desired to raise the embankment. Chinese labourers dig a trench alongside the track corresponding in depth to its height and of the same width. Putting a few shovelfuls of earth in a flat basket, two of these are attached to the yoke and carried at a trot to the track and emptied. This is repeated by thousands of labourers, thousands of times, until thousands of versts of track are raised. If it be a cutting instead of an embankment, then the earth removed from the cutting or trench is piled up

on both banks. This doubtless was the way in which Chinghis Khan raised his earth defences, the method by which the great wall of China was put together, but it is not what one would expect of a civilised country in this twentieth century. As the engineers use caissons in making bridge foundations, have electric plant to carry on the work at night, and all kinds of the latest improved American tools and machinery, they certainly know that tip-waggons and steam-navvies are used for railway building — why they do not use them I was unable to ascertain.

In Mongolia Russian carters are engaged to remove the earth in very small two-wheeled tip-carts, and I was informed that the rate paid was ten shillings a day for each man, horse, and cart.

A tunnel about two miles in length has to be made between Bakhtu and Mendukhe where the line crosses the Great Khingan mountain range. At present it is little more than begun. Working from the east one gallery has been driven about 180 feet into the limestone. Although entrance to the works was "strictly forbidden" I had no difficulty in seeing the gallery and reaching the face, where foreign quarrymen were boring with hand-drills. There was a complete electric installation for lighting, signalling, firing blasting charges, etc.; but no power-drills, or compressors appeared to be in use. The Russian trains bulking much larger than those permissible in British railways, the tunnel although only for a single line has almost the same dimensions as required elsewhere for two sets of rails, but the height is greater than the width, consequently the boring is being carried on simultaneously at two separate levels. The work is much hampered by water, which was pouring out of the workings in a constant stream, filling a trench half a metre in depth. Judging from the methods pursued it is unlikely that the tunnel will be completed unless

the contract is made over to foreign engineers. As there is a fairly good zigzag mountain railway available for through traffic there is no pressing need for the completion of the tunnel, and doubtless the Russians, with whom tunnelling is an unpractised art, will exaggerate the difficulties encountered and surmounted, ultimately accomplishing a "great triumph of engineering" at an immense cost to the State. It may be that the completion of the work will be postponed indefinitely, or even absolutely abandoned.

Along the whole route the line was guarded by Russian soldiers, chiefly Kubanski Cossacks, but there were also infantry and several parks of artillery. The most noticeable fortress is near Fu-li-ahdé on the west bank of the Nonni, about twelve miles to the south of Tsitsikar. This is small but of the modern type, and is further protected by earth-works, rifle pits, and trenches. The barracks are situated to the north of the fort, and are protected on two sides by a rampart wall with trenches further afield. The officers' quarters are in low ranges of brick houses, tiled and arranged similar to those at Kharbin. Block-houses are neither numerous nor conspicuous.

The ordinary strong army post consists of brick-built houses erected under a bluff, with the usual Cossack look-out on the highest ground beyond, as at Biagchin. The Cossack posts consist of two long trenches roofed with poles, wattles, and thatched or turfed, with small windows in gables along the front; a wattle-and-daub house for the officers, and a large, low stable. These form three sides of a quadrangle, and the whole is surrounded by a strong wattle fence almost as high as the buildings. The well is near the entrance gate, and the courtyard is the muster ground. Wattle fences surround adjoining paddocks for the horses. In some places, for instance at Yakshi, where there is more than one troop

RUINS OF CHINESE ARSENAL AT KHARBIN

of Cossacks, each company has its own camp, or quadrangle. From these posts, the patrol parties of fifty are sent at intervals, whilst some have also to furnish and communicate with Cossack outposts, consisting of ten men, or fewer, lodged in a felt tent, or yurta, near the look-out tower.

Infantry detachments are employed on the same duty, living in one or two felt yurtas, protected with rifle trenches. Those yurtas into which I ventured were all clean, well-kept, warm, and comfortable, especially those of the infantry. Five roughly constructed benches were fixed to posts about three feet from the earth floor around the sides of the tent; on these the bedding was laid, and over them hung the few personal effects of the occupants. Usually there was a small ikon in the "Krasnœ Ugol," a cheap oleograph portrait of the Tsar opposite the door; sometimes one of the Tsaritsa also, and a few gaudy coloured prints of fancy scenes in the Boxer war.

The Eastern Chinese railway is like those of Siberia in so far as it takes the easiest route without regard to the situation of towns between the terminal points. Modashi is the nearest station to Ningut, twenty versts to the south; Kirin is three times that distance from the line. Hulan-chen is twenty miles to the north, Tsitsikar twelve, Kailar is nearer. For many miles the track crosses land which has been under cultivation, but is now abandoned and fallow.

In the eastern province many Chinese remain. Imempo is already largely Russian, but Aje-khe is quite Mantzu. This was the first place in Manchuria at which there were unmistakable indications of Chinese rule; native policemen and officials, usually accompanied by Russian soldiers, were continually in evidence, in what must be regarded as a very poor, squalid Chinese town.

Kharbin has the credit of being a wholly Russian town, a

settlement made by the railway in the Manchurian wilds, which sprang into first-rate importance commercially and politically at the magic touch of Russian occupation. That is the American way of stating the change that has been made; it has also been accepted by more recent travellers.

Kharbin is the name given to a group of villages near the junction of the Port Arthur branch with the main line, at the point where the railway crosses the Sungari. The name, sometimes spelt Harbin, is properly Harbilin, from a western spur of the Chan-kuan-tsan or "Long White Mountain" range. Here was a Chinese citadel and town, destroyed by the Russians, of which only the ruins remain near Old Kharbin. The Russian settlement of Old Kharbin was a west-end suburb of the Chinese town, near the residence of a Tsian-tsiun, where were the better class fantsas. It has grown into quite an extensive Russian town, the commandant and chief army officers being quartered there. It possesses a Meteorological Observatory, and has a Russian church improvised from Chinese buildings. The belfry is new. There are several promenades. A large public garden with open-air theatre, kiosks, band-stand, and the usual appurtenances of a Siberian pleasure resort, appears once to have been the private grounds of a monastery or seminary. It has the usual Chinese thatched mud wall round it, a belt of trees, and over the different gates some slight indications of having been fortified. There is a small joss-house, in ruins, in a corner of the grounds, near the present premises of the Russo-Chinese Bank.

In Old Kharbin there are two hotels, of which the newest is the "New York," several restaurants, and many stores of Russian and other merchants, but no Chinese. The leading retailers of earlier Siberia, including the German firm of Kunst and Albers, have already established themselves centrally in Old Kharbin.

The line runs quite near the settlement, separating it from the new Chinese town, but there is no station, and probably the trains will not stop there, but run three miles further west to New Kharbin, the headquarters of the railway staff and site of the workshops, engine sheds, and station warehouses. At New Kharbin is the chief post-office, and the agencies of various Government departments. An imposing wooden church has been erected within a high fence, and at the entrance are two field pieces of large calibre. New Kharbin is largely, if not entirely, a railway and Government settlement. A mile further west is Kharbin Quay, the riverside station with sidings, warehouses, and a station named Sungari, the present terminus of the Port Arthur line. The riverside port has a new and extensive Chinese town, and a growing Russian settlement. Brick dwellings, mostly of one story, are being erected by the hundred — I met one contractor who had himself engaged to build 500 for railway officials — and in a very short time this Sungari suburb will undoubtedly be the most thickly populated and thriving of all the Kharbins, if not the best business centre in Manchuria. The river route is likely to remain the cheapest for goods traffic, and the water being deep along the east bank, the place will provide an excellent market for the exchange of imported goods and native produce. Warehouses are needed; hotels, restaurants, concert-rooms, and a free outdoor summer theatre, with such other commercial requirements as the Russian settlers demand, are already provided. For the officials a large Russian hotel — of 400 rooms, a theatre of varieties and restaurant all under the one roof — is in course of erection.

If any doubt the reality of the Russian occupation of Manchuria, a knowledge of Kharbin will convince them that the hold the Russians have upon the country is thorough, and to all appearances must be permanent. Kharbin is not

cosmopolitan as Alexandria is, still less is it Chinese: it is Siberian.

The Russians with ready adaptability have made the most of the material at hand; Kharbin is an achievement of which they are proud. Roads are not a strong point with Russians, still in Old Kharbin there are sidewalks paved with brick, and guttered. The use of the telephone is at present restricted to railway and Government officials, but the electric lighting of the principal thoroughfares exemplifies the progress of modern methods in the Far East, for Irkutsk has only oil lamps in the streets and acetylene at its summer theatre.

A point not so pleasing is the Russian endorsement of the brutal Chinese judiciary procedure. The police of Old Kharbin are Chinese, but these are not expected to interfere with Russian subjects, and Cossacks are more in evidence than they. The Chinese temples, courts, and arsenal have been destroyed, but the prison remains; there the cang, the thick and thin bamboo, and the whole battery of the public headsmen are on view, and behind the cage the prisoners are exposed in public, and tortured. In the main street, just outside this part of Chinatown is a small joss-house, very dilapidated and forlorn, where I went several times to see if perchance any of the heathen still burnt joss-sticks at the old shrine. I found no evidence that the place was used for any such purpose, but one day, hanging by the pigtail from the tree facing the portal was a newly severed human head. I returned to the town by another road, and from the trees by the side of the highway I saw several hanging from the boughs to which they were knotted by the pigtail. The Mantzus passed by on the other side of the street, and though they saw appeared not to notice these ghastly mementoes of legal vengeance. Then I happened on a Chefu "boy" I had met in Vladivostok, and asked him to what side this gruesome display belonged.

KHARBIN QUAY ON THE SUNGARI

CHINAMAN'S HEAD AT KHARBIN

"No savvy; top-side savvy."

In this instance "top-side" was the local administrative Government. A Russian officer's wife furnished me with the information. A number of vagabonds, supposed to be outlaws and "Khungus" or bandits, had been captured and were being executed in batches out on the heath. In all she believed forty-two heads were to be hung upon the boulevard of Old Kharbin and, as the hard weather was fast approaching, they would remain there without change or decay for six months, and so impress the passers-by. The executions were in public; the Mandarin and Russian officials both being present.

In the Khingan I passed a slope on which there had been an engagement some time before between Khungus and Russian troops; wolves and carrion crows were much in evidence, but the remains on which they were feasting were those of animals that had fallen in the fight, and nowhere west of Kharbin were there signs of the Chinese legal procedure being in force.

From Zatun, on the west bank of the Sungari, to Siao-Bakhu-ma, on the east bank of the Nonni beyond Entutun, the line leaves Manchuria and runs through Mongolia, entering the Hai-lun-shang province again a few miles from Tsitsikar. This was steppe region, as was that after crossing the Khingan to Khailar. A highway runs parallel to the line for the greater part of the distance, but neither upon it nor elsewhere in the neighbourhood were the Chinese numerous. The most Chinese of the villages passed was Jalantun, but even here Russian stores, workshops, and houses are established. Khailar is quite Russian both as to the new town near the railway and the old Chinese town three versts distant. From this old walled city — a chief town of the Mongols — not only have the Chinese been driven, but the Daurs, Solons, and other nomad races of the region have now no dwelling, excepting an inn near the western gate

set aside for their accommodation. The Mongols live in a village some miles away. Russian merchants have the old Chinese shops; a Russian tavern-keeper the inn, whilst the finest of the buildings have been utilised for officers' clubs, the mess of the non-commissioned officers, and barracks for the troops. One of the large temples, with a Buddhist seminary, has been converted into an artillery arsenal; it is fortified and its guns command both the old town and the new. Another temple is the residence of the Commandant. His suite are lodged in the best of the houses near by, which were formerly the homes of the Chinese officials and wealthy merchants. A large space has been cleared in the centre of the town for the new Russian church. Khailar is not a ruin, though its walls are decaying. Apparently it escaped destruction by the Russians, who were commanded by General Orloff, whose conduct throughout the campaign was most praiseworthy. Now Khailar is more Russian than many towns in Siberia. The tri-colour flag is seen everywhere; Russian feasts, saints' days, and Holy Days are rigorously kept. No shopkeeper may open store on Court holidays, and on the Emperor's birthday and similar occasions everybody must decorate his house front with the national flag just as though he were in St. Petersburg or Moscow.

The rate of travelling by construction trains is very slow. From the official time table of the Eastern Chinese railway I read that trains conveying material may attain a maximum speed of eight miles an hour, or with stoppages six miles in a run of 390 miles—the scheduled time for the journey being sixty-three hours four minutes—I know from experience that the rate is less. West of Tsitsikar the speed was even slower; but there were trains, as those which conveyed Governor-General Grodekov and M. Lessar which averaged 300 miles a day.

The accommodation I had was very rough, a place to

stand, sit, or lie down as luck might be, on a "platform," that is, an open trolley truck; as a change, a cramped corner between machinery. Sometimes it rained very hard and there was no shelter. One night the choice of a bed was on the track under a truck, or by the side of it in the interstices of a wood-pile. There were worse times, when one could only sit still and allow the rain to soak through every garment with which one could cover one's self. At other times, when crossing the Khingan, and on the Khingan plateau, west of that range, the cold was intense, on occasions almost unbearable, when exposed upon the platform, although I had a leather jacket, a thick fur shoob, and a large felt blanket. It was little comfort to know there were passengers who suffered more. The army officers had special trains; the General a splendid Pullman parlour car, with which he blocked the line against us all one night. Accommodation of the same class was at the disposal of the chief engineers of the different sections, and a train with nice white napery on the tables of its restaurant, bright silvered fittings, and replete with every comfort the ingenuity of man could devise, brought an Inspector alongside of our line of waggons at Jalantun.

The railway authorities were within their rights in refusing to carry any particular passenger by their trains, but so many, from card-sharpers to bank directors, obtained franks for any journey they wished to take, that to refuse any mere business man seemed unjust. To all appearances there were no reasons for excluding any one, and the treatment of the English reminded me of a story told in Vladivostok of a great sea captain. He was a Russian on a voyage from Nagasaki to Vladivostok, and as passengers he had three brothers, one with an American passport, the other had French papers, the third Austrian; they were millionaires and Jews. For no particular reason the captain dis-

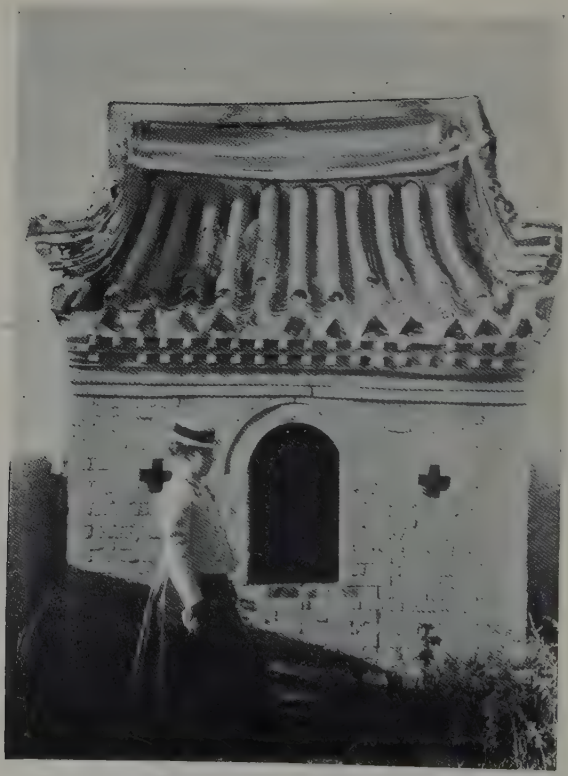
liked millionaires and detested Jews, so when one of the brothers came to him and requested him to call with his ship at Gensan in passing, he declined to do so. The Jew persisted, and his brothers supported him. The captain was as firm in his refusal. "But," said one, "I will pay you. What will it cost? When I am in Paris I command what opera shall be played — that costs money, but I have my choice." "And I," said another, "in Austria, am allowed to direct just where, when, and how His Imperial Majesty shall arrange his shooting parties — surely you will do what I want you to do." "And I," said the third, "when I am in New York, I do what I like and I am going to do as I like here! Yesh, shiree — you bet!"

"Yes," said the captain, "you will all three of you like to go into your stateroom at once and stay there until I get this ship into Vladivostok, for I intend to make you — you millionaires and Jews! And, if any one of you dares to come out, one of my men will at once knock him down with a marlin spike, for I am captain of this ship, and here I do as I like!" They went. The captain said boastingly to me, "Then I was proud! Never in my life have I been so happy as at that time, when I had those three rich Jews who wanted to go to Gensan locked in the stateroom — never so happy, never!"

The feeling that prompted that act is common with Russian officials — at present it is the English who excite it most. Alone it accounts for much of the differential, discriminating treatment accorded Britons; I applied it to my own experience; it did not seem sufficient explanation. I am vain enough to think so still.

Some of the excuses I have heard both before and since are quite ridiculous. It is a risky journey and the officials cannot guarantee the safety of the passenger — the country is not a whit more dangerous than Siberia. There is no

RUSSIAN CHURCH AT NIKOLSKOE



JOSS-HOUSE NEAR KHARBIN

available rolling stock — trains and engines, under a full head of steam, were nearly always waiting at every siding. The food has to be conveyed by the railway, and the officials are unable to provide a sufficient supply — most of the commodities go into the country by the river route, are conveyed by road in Pekin carts, and there are pedlers distributing food everywhere. No hotel accommodation — it is easier to get hotel accommodation in Manchuria than in Siberian towns. Well, His Excellency, the Commander-in-Chief of the forces in Manchuria, says you may not go; that is enough. Unfortunately it is not, so long as men of other nationalities are permitted not only to enter and cross, but even to establish themselves in the very heart of Manchuria. England is by treaty entitled to be regarded as a most favoured nation. To close Manchuria to her subjects, whilst aiding those of other nations to visit it, merely convinces the Englishman that he must regard the Chinese territory now occupied by Russia as he does Tibet — a fair field for desperate adventure.

The action of the Russian authorities with regard to this matter combined with the failure of the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg to obtain for me such privileges as were granted to other foreigners, indicated a special reason for the exclusion of Englishmen. I made the journey; I was able to follow the railway from east to west throughout its entire length as I intended to do, and I observed as closely as I could, half expecting to discover something which it might reasonably be supposed the Russian authorities were desirous of keeping secret. Being alone — free of the obnoxious Cossack guard with which it has been the custom to provide privileged and detected strangers — I was able to move where I wished; but, having no companion, my investigations were quite superficial, and I lacked the means to follow what have proved clues to the mystery.

CHAPTER XIX

CONQUEST BY RAILWAY

RUSSIA was much later than the west of Europe in making railways, but when once introduced, the country became suddenly enamoured of them and has been building them where and where not required ever since. In Poland and along the western frontier there are various strategic lines, but the first railway built with a view to conquest of foreign territory was the Trans-Caspian line, commenced in 1880 when General Skobelev started upon his memorable campaign into Turkestan. That line was intended to run to Askabad only, some 520 versts, but now comprises 2345 versts of purely military railway, running for many miles within a few yards of the Persian boundary and having a branch to Kushk on the Afghan frontier.

This railway produced such consternation in England that Russia, if she did not obtain an inflated idea of the real military value of the line, cannot but have been satisfactorily impressed by the importance British statesmen and strategists attached to its existence.

With designs upon the acquisition of further territory in the Far East, Russia constructed the Siberian railway as part of a policy of military bluff with which to defy Europe and demonstrate ummistakably her potential supremacy. The limit of this railway extension in Asia has not yet been reached.

The Trans-Siberian railway was begun in 1891. Before the first section was ready for traffic in 1897, Russia had secured the concession for the Eastern Chinese railway, and the construction of the Siberian line by the original route was postponed in favour of the Manchurian line. Then the English yielded Port Arthur, a lease of the Quan-Tung peninsula was obtained, and again the Russian rails came further south. In 1898 permission was obtained from China to construct a railway from the Trans-Siberian trunk line to Pekin by way of Kalgan, that is, from the west. Russian diplomacy triumphed easily: the construction of the line was a more difficult matter. Even through parts of Manchuria the route had to be surveyed by stealth, and in 1900 the Boxer rising delayed the actual work of building the line.

It had another effect.

A number of Scandinavian missionaries in Mongolia sought protection behind the Russian lines. Some found employment at once as interpreters at the gold mines on the Onon and Tola; others were engaged by the local agents of the Russian Government to furnish information as to the country through which the projected line to Pekin by way of Kiakhta and Kalgan would pass. These men proved that a better and shorter route existed than that of the caravan track across the desert of Gobi. It was shown that a line could be taken just as easily, through more fertile country on a higher level, along the west slopes of the Khingan range where water was plentiful.

In 1901 the construction of a railway by that route was actually commenced.

For reasons needless to specify, the Russian Government did not publish any particulars of the work undertaken. The building of a railway does not violate any treaty rights, and

by keeping its existence unknown Russia stole a march upon those powers interested in maintaining the integrity of the Chinese Empire.

Under cover of work necessary in order to complete the Manchurian railway — declared by M. de Witte, on November 9, 1900, to be then capable of traffic through to Port Arthur and Vladivostok — this southern branch is being built with all possible speed, as a purely strategic railway having Kalgan as its objective.

The usual precautions have been taken to ensure secrecy. The country was cleared of Chinese as far as Khargo. In the autumn of 1900, and all through the spring and summer the Cossacks were hunting the country side for Khungus, but almost every assemblage of poverty-stricken Chinese have been regarded as marauders and wiped out when found. Only the nomad Mongols have been allowed in the region and they favour Russia to the extent even of erecting a memorial at Tukumè on which in Manchu, Thibetan, Chinese, and their own dialect, they express their satisfaction at the country being delivered from the Chinese by the Russians. Then such foreigners as needed to be passed through Manchuria by the Eastern Chinese railway, were accompanied either by a guard of Cossacks or a Russian agent. As far as known, no Englishman was permitted officially to make his way through the territory independently, and those who were detected in attempting to do so were turned back, or conducted to the Russian frontier. Even the few Englishmen, who by special favour were granted permission to hunt in the Altai Mountains, were furnished with a guard of Cossacks and their limit of free action circumscribed. The whole territory was closely watched by Russian agents who, last year, were present in large numbers and unusually active and alert.

OLD CHINESE TEMPLE, NOW RUSSIAN ARSENAL AT KHAILAR

RAILWAY BUILDING IN EAST MONGOLIA

It was purely by accident that I saw this line and the construction trains bound south passing over it. It was useless for me to attempt to follow the line to railway-head, but I was able to get some information respecting it.

About seventy miles west of Khailar, where the trunk line of the Great Siberian railway, here the Eastern Chinese railway, is some 650 miles north of Pekin, the strategic line of full gauge turns off south, crossing a small tributary of the Khailar river. It then skirts the east shore of Lake Dalai-Nor, passes on the east side of Buin-Nor, to the river Khalka. Thence it winds its way south along the high plateau of the Khingan Mountains, above the level of the eastern portion of the desert of Gobi, almost parallel to the old Mongol trade route from Khailar to Dolon-Nor and, passing west of Khadjur-chin, will reach the Great Wall of China about sixty miles west-north-west of Pekin at Kalgan.

This track, it is scarcely more, follows the surface contour and there has been little attempt at finding a level, the sleepers being laid on the top of the turf, where this is sufficiently even to permit of them bearing equally, without being embedded in the soil. The embankments and cuttings are unimportant, and the metals are carried over the many rivulets and mountain streams on wood-pile bridges. The western slopes of the Khingan are rolling, turf-covered hills, having a thin layer of black soil on firm sand, with a soft sand-stone substratum. There is very little snow in winter; in the north the hills are almost bare of timber.

At present this line, usable by military, goods, and railway construction trains, is just such a rough line as contractors put down alongside a track, before commencing to make the embankments and cuttings, or lay the permanent way. Its construction has been supervised by Mr. Bocharov, the chief engineer of the west section of the Manchurian railway, and

for the most part has been built by Russian workmen. Commenced in the spring of 1901 it is possible that it may already have reached as far south as Dolon-Nor-Tin, far nearer Pekin than the tombs of the Chinese Imperial family, which it passes to west. Some sections of the Siberian railway were made at the rate of 350 miles a year, and this rough line could be laid as quickly as the construction line through Manchuria, which in parts was put down at the rate of three miles a day.

Just how far it will be extended depends entirely upon political considerations. In certain events it may become the permanent line between St. Petersburg and Pekin, and be open to the public.

The British Government has negatived the Russian proposal for a railway from Pekin to Kalgan, although there would not be any objection to a line through the Peiho valley providing it were owned, and absolutely controlled, by the Chinese themselves. Temporarily baulked in this direction, the Russians next propose to continue the existing Hankow-Pekin line northward from Lu-ku-chiao to the Pataling Gate of the Great Wall, thence by way of Hau-lai-sin and Huan-hua-su to Kalgan, where the line from Khailar would join it.

Its immediate value is enhanced by the fact that its whereabouts is unknown, and its very existence doubted.

The powers who are guaranteeing the integrity of China may believe that the desert of Gobi is between Russia and the Great Wall on the west, and that this desert cannot be crossed by an army, even of Cossacks, with certainty or without great delay; such delay as would enable them to put troops into China to hold Kalgan and the Hun-ho valley west of Pekin.

If, instead of having to cross the desert, the Russian advance force, mobilised in Trans-Baikalia, can be brought to Kalgan at two days' notice, the military situation is changed.

If, in addition to this, the Russian attacking force is de-

A CONSTRUCTION TRAIN IN MONGOLIA

trained between Dalai-Nor-Tin and Kalgan, and proceeds eastwards by the Luan-Khe valley, it can reach Hu-be-koy, and by that road attack Pekin on the north, and at various points can intercept any relieving force proceeding to Pekin from the sea by way of Tientsin, and outflank them, although Russia may not be in command of the sea in the gulf of Pechili.

The purely strategic value of the line is immense, as a glance at the map will make manifest. The desert is no longer a barrier; the Great Wall and a few Chinese troops in the hill passes, no better protection. Between Kalgan and Port Arthur Pekin is held like a nut between the jaws of a vice; Tientsin is the only feeble block which can prevent them from being closed whenever it shall please Russia to advance.

From the military point of view a railway is an excellent weapon, but a poor bulwark. Since she has possessed railways Russia has not been invaded, and it is quite possible that this long line from the Baltic to the Pacific may yet prove to be Russia's weakness instead of strength. Even as a weapon of offence I believe it to be much over-appraised. Its carrying power is indicated elsewhere, but even with increased rolling stock the maximum is soon reached, as in some sections the supplies of water are so short, until wells are deepened, that nothing like continuous traffic can be attempted. There are other weaker spots, and there is always the possibility that even the accidental interruption of communications may mean a serious disaster.

Of the political value of the line there is no doubt; it is indeed difficult to overestimate it. A railway, no matter how poor its quality, is the best proof of effective occupation. Under pressure, as at Fashoda, the flag too hastily hoisted may be hauled down, but a railway cannot easily be removed; or its ownership changed, when the owner is a State. Even a private line is troublesome, as the Russians know from their own experience of the Newchwang and Shan-hai-Kuan properties. They also

are confident that with a railway in existence from the Siberian trunk-line to Kalgan, they have a foothold in the Chinese Empire from which it will be most difficult to dislodge them.

There seems little doubt but an advance further south is intended; an extension which will meet the northward advance of France in Yunnan, and so cut off the British traders on the Yang-tse-kiang from commerce with the Chinese back-lands — the ultimate market of foreign goods imported at Shanghai. The Siberian railways and the extensions through Manchuria and Mongolia will win trade for Russian manufacturers, and threaten China by attacking its revenues, or such of them as are derived from the duties levied on sea-borne foreign goods.

Of the progress made recently with the actual work of construction we know very little. Great quantities of railway stores were forwarded in the spring of 1902, and the Siberian railways were closed for a time to the goods of the general public. A large army of workmen also went east, but as the outbreak of cholera is said to have stayed work in Kharbin and Eastern Manchuria, it may be assumed that most of the labourers were employed on this Mongolian railway. The present limit of the completed section as indicated on the map, has been determined from information I have received from a private source. By another correspondent I am advised that the extent of the cholera epidemic has been grossly exaggerated in newspaper reports because the Russian authorities do not wish the interior of Manchuria to be visited by inquisitive foreigners at present. It is an undoubted fact that trains could pass over the whole length of the Siberian and Manchurian railways more than twelve months ago; it is also a fact that the lines do not pay working expenses, yet not only is the Manchurian section still closed to the general public, but, according to the latest announcement, will not be opened to general through traffic until the spring of 1904. In the

meantime photographing upon or near the Siberian railways is strictly prohibited.

The Russians may, and possibly will, use the railway for other than military purposes. It is quite conceivable that Russian settlements will be founded all along the line, with a Russian town and mart at the Great Wall. It is probable that the railway will be used to foster Russian trade, and British commerce with China may be irreparably injured if not absolutely destroyed by it, for Russia has differentiated successfully against British travellers desirous of visiting Central Asia, and is attempting to carry out the same policy of exclusion in the Far East.

The Tartar invaded Europe on horseback, and on horseback hurried out of the country. Earlier and later kingdoms have been won by the sword and held by the sword — for a time. Now Russia, extending an empire across two continents, employs that modern method she deems to be more lasting, the conquest of territories by railway. So far it has been successful. At least it is thorough, and so far as one can judge it is permanent.

CHAPTER XX

RUSSIA'S MANIFEST DESTINY

ENGLAND and Russia, both at nearly the same time, were conquered and predominated by the same race, the Norsemen. In about the same period both of the conquered nations absorbed the ruling race; in the same century both extended their dominion to distant lands, and one nation produced Oliver Cromwell, the other Boris Godunov. There are numerous other analogies, in earlier and more recent times, but notwithstanding all these there are no two civilised races more dissimilar than the English and Russian. Both are great, and in each case the greatness is undoubtedly due to the same aggressive Norse element; both are imbued with the same sense of their own power, each believes that it will attain world supremacy. During the nineteenth century, and the latter half of it particularly, both races made enormous progress. The means were different, but the results almost identical, in so far as both nations largely extended territorial dominion, acquired wealth, and increased in population.

In England personal and individual liberty seems essential to existence: in Russia the State wholly subordinates the individual; externally — even in the expression of thought — there must be implied submissiveness to the State. In England and in the Colonial nations she has founded oversea, a man is perfectly free; in Russia he is not. Actually the difference is not great, for generally in both nations the ordinary

man has equal freedom to supply himself with what he may legitimately require, and practically the distinction is that whilst a Briton may accomplish whatever he will and can, a Russian may rise in power only as an official of the State. On the other hand in England the aristocratic and moneyed classes unite in making it extremely difficult for the man possessed merely of ability, to raise himself to a position of real importance: whilst in Russia birth is of less account, there the noble nincompoop and inept plutocrat is not entrusted with the direction of any affairs of State, still less allowed any influence in the direction of the national policy. The Russian State rewards ability and accomplishment rather than time service.

Freedom raises men possessed of great individual resource; State control inculcates ready obedience and develops the passive quality of endurance. The free man is more aggressive. In nature, the aggressive forms are shortest lived as a species; the weak, the unresisting, the non-combative forms persist longest.

In England the initial force is derived from the people, and the Government is the expression of their will. In Russia the will of the ruler as interpreted to the people by officials is the law the nation must obey. With a Government so constituted as that of Great Britain, and also of the United States of America, it is not easy to predicate exactly what may be the wish of the majority of the people in any one matter, therefore a fixed policy is next to impossible — even Free Trade and the Monroe Doctrine may be abandoned when the people express themselves on either subject. In Russia the ruler has only to form an opinion and declare it, for his will to be fulfilled, in so far as the people can give effect to the instructions they receive; and to continue a policy is easier than to change its direction or substitute something different.

Russia therefore might have a fixed policy; instead she has

a continuous one — the extension of empire in the direction of least resistance.

Beyond that imperative demand for increased territory which the growth of the nation produced, the forward policy of Russia may be derived in part from sentimental and in part from practical causes.

Rurik and his kin were not content with Russia, they wished to take Constantinople. They tried again and again and failed. The attainment of their object became a tradition, and persists, but even so recently as 1878 the resistance was too great to admit of it being fulfilled on the eve of its accomplishment. Ivan IV. and the Tsars of the middle ages tried to conquer the west without success; Peter I. even found the defence too strong, and last century probably witnessed the final advance of Russia in that direction. In the north, and in the east, Russia was the stronger, and in those directions expanded; trying again and again to reach towards the south, and only as she gained in strength generation after generation, succeeding little by little.

Peter the Great's mythical will does not deserve a moment's serious consideration, save as indicating the policy the Russian ruler at the time of its first publication wished Western Europe to believe. The world policy of Russia is a gradual growth. It is the Christian ideal. The expulsion of the Turk, the conversion of the Asiatic heathen, world-wide dominion of Russian orthodoxy, are nothing more than the realisation of Christ's Kingdom on Earth. Henry of Navarre evolved a grand scheme for the Government of Europe and the attainment of perpetual peace. Alexander I., imbued with the sentiments of the French Humanitarians, aspired also to the formation of a Christian Nation to embrace all races, and for this formed the Holy Alliance. He waged a religious war against Napoleon for the sake of universal peace; he listened

to Moravians and Quakers, and came under the influence of Frau Krüdener, a pupil of the mystic, Stilling, and she inspired and revised that Holy Alliance treaty which was signed by the Tsar, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Austria, and was presented for the same purpose to the King of England and other monarchs. Canning broke up that alliance, which Metternich had utilised as a means of oppression.

When Alexander died — or become a religious vagrant and went to Tomsk — his brother Constantine ought to have succeeded him, but was passed over in favour of Nicholas I. It was during this reign that Slavophilism rose, and from that movement the policy of modern Russia is directly traceable. Slavophilism was derived from Hegelian philosophy, which enunciates an Absolute Reason developed through incarnations of National Civilisations, each better than the last, whilst the last, a synthesis of the series of progressions, will exceed and comprehend all of them and produce Universal Peace. Hegel, or at least the German Hegelians, saw in Germany the last National Civilisation: the Russians saw Russia as that, not Germany. Hegel said the world was composed of men and Russians. Aksakov, the Slavophil, retorted, "Yes, we Russians are the Beyond-men," and Dostoievski declared that the Russians were something more than simply human, Panhuman. Aksakov thought that the principle of the Russian village commune could be extended indefinitely — nationally and internationally — and, that accomplished, the reign of universal peace would ensue.

Some Slavophils rejected Peter the Great's innovations, and reverted to earlier fashions in dress and manners; others thought the reforms he and his successors had introduced from the west were insufficient; they belonged to the period of transition from nationality to universality. The two camps quarrelled, then compromised, and the compromise was the

existing nationalism of Russia. Soloviev ridiculed Slavophilism as "the worship of national virtue, adoration of national strength, and reverence of national barbarism — Katkov's Islamism."

The chief direct importance of the Slavophil movement is due to the fact that Alexander III. was influenced by it. In his youth he revelled in its aspirations, its exponents were his companions, Katkov was his personal friend, and Aksakov remained his counsellor after he ascended the throne. Alexander III. put the Slavophil theories into his practice. He was anti-German: his idea was to ally Russia with France and thus squeeze Germany when needful. His successor, the reigning Emperor, continues the policy his father pressed into prominence, and his summoning of the Peace Congress in 1898 is an indication of adherence to the ideals of the Slavophil party.

The religious view, that of the Orthodox Russian Church, is that the Russian creed is the only correct form of Christianity; that Roman Catholicism, Protestantism, and heretical sectarianism will merge ultimately in "Orthodoxy," and then, in an age of general forbearance and consent, the reign of violence will be at an end. Its work is to repress proselytism by the heterodox, to convert the heathen. The territorial expansion of Russia is a means to attaining its ends. The view of the Russian Church and of the Russian people is that Asia is to be absorbed by Russia, not always by actual conquest, but as destined, in order that Russia's mission may be filled.

Such is the Russian ideal. There is no reason to doubt that, though it may appear fanciful and impracticable to people of other nations, it is actually held by many men whose sincerity is beyond question, and these not only hope for, but also expect, its early realisation. With these visionaries seeking the millenium it is impossible not to sympathise,

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since every one, no matter of what race or creed, can join with them in wishing for the triumph of universal peace over the elements of disorder and confusion. It is possible the Russian Church may attain a large measure of success. Representing primitive and communistic Christianity particularly, it possesses essentials which appeal to all Christian sects, and now that the Roman Church has passed its zenith of temporal power, and Anglican Protestantism is sterile, the next great religious revival may emanate from the Eastern Church. A priest of the power of Sergius, the Father John of Kronstadt, working outside Russia could awaken the west. The commercialism of the United States of America, of England and her Colonies, is widening the gulf between the classes, is making the few rich, richer — the many poor, poorer still. The despairing poor of all Anglo-Saxondom might see in "Orthodoxy" an aspect of Christianity not only new to them, but one they could accept. At the right psychologic moment some such wave of religious emotionalism as the world has several times seen will again quicken Europe; will roll over the American continent from Cape Nome to Key West, spread to the British island nations, and unite all to one creed. If it should be Russian orthodoxy that triumphs, Russia will become the world power. That, for Anglo-Saxons especially, is the political danger of Russia's ideal "world-policy."

It is apparent that with very little ingenuity the idealistic world-policy of Russia can be utilised to further the material welfare of the empire. The ruler of all the Russias is an autocrat. His will is law, and his power predominant, yet there exists another governing force of which the upholders of military prestige are the most prominent members. So long as the idealistic policy is compatible with what they believe to be the best policy for Russia to pursue as a temporal power, they are silent. They may or may not subscribe to the essential Slavo-

phil doctrines in the abstract, they are chiefly, if not wholly, concerned with the material benefit of Russia, her aggrandisement and enrichment.

Without being actually antagonistic to the idealistic policy, theirs is a practical policy, which results in extending the limits of empire towards the south, towards ice-free ports and tropical produce, towards the east and new markets.

Since Russia has attempted industrialism she feels the need all manufacturing nations have experienced of securing tropical produce which she can convert into goods, and of extending her markets amongst those who purchase such finished wares as she can supply. The first is the most pressing. England has India and other tropical possessions; Belgium has the Congo; France, Tonkin; Germany, parts of Africa, Papua, and Borneo. The United States of America, although not entirely in the temperate zone as the others are, has acquired by conquest and purchase tropical islands in the East and West Indies, and her action in regard to Nicaragua and Venezuela prove how keenly alive she is to the value of tropical feeders for her industries. Without such properties no purely manufacturing community can compete successfully in the world's markets, and the necessity of possessing some such territory has forced itself upon modern Russia.

This is the real ground for apprehension Anglo-Saxons have in regard to India. Had Russia tropical possessions she would not be so jealous as she is of Britain's hold upon that country. She has approached Abyssinia. The existence there of co-religionists afforded an excuse, and the act also shows the potency of the idealistic policy. The real quest was tropical produce, and in order to obtain a supply from a source she can absolutely control, she looks now upon Persia, Arabia, and southern Asia much further east, as possible future possessions.

Although Russia has immense territories in Asia, these owing

to the scantiness and poverty of the population do not provide the market desired, but by rigid protection the most is made of all new countries acquired. Still the need of additional markets for manufactures is in no sense pressing upon Russia as it presses upon other countries.

As a nation Russia is less combative than Great Britain, and consequently her extension has been along the line of least resistance. England has fought the strongest countries, those challenging her supremacy; Russia, unless on the defensive, only neighbours, and of those the weaker and decaying powers. In turn we English conquered the Spaniards, the Dutch, and the French when they were near the zenith of their power, and we captured India at a time when it would have been easier for us to conquer and hold an empire in Africa. To obtain a port on the Baltic Russia tried against Poland and Sweden in turn, but before successful first reached the Pacific and had occupied Northern Asia as far as Kamchatka. The line of least resistance is taken only by moving bodies of small momentum and low velocity, so is evidence of weakness, not strength. Russia, wherever the opposition to her advance has been such as to endanger her existence, has withdrawn without risking so weighty an issue in actual conflict. It is merely a matter of national policy, personal bravery of the individual is not in question — the individual Russian will advance to certain death as boldly and fearlessly as the best of other races.

Taking advantage of this known policy of Russia, it is apparent that for this reason, if no other, she will not attack a strongly defended India if Persia, or Afghanistan, weakly supported, is at her mercy; that, strongly opposed in the Far East, and allowed a free hand with reference to Asia Minor or the Levant, her manifest destiny will direct her to extend in the latter direction; that, if resolutely opposed all along the southern coast line from the Danube to Port Arthur and

Possiet, she will content herself by fulfilling her manifest destiny in regard to Mongolia, Tibet, and Chinese Turkestan. Wherever turned back at one time she will, on some other occasion which she deems more fitting, return for the conquest or annexation delayed, and meanwhile seek some other weak point through which she can break when and as least expected to do.

So far as regards European nations, the United States of America and Japan, the military advance of Russia in Asia can be regarded with equanimity. In face of determined opposition Russia will halt. She has relied, and still relies almost entirely upon bluff. Her enormous bulk, like that of the old Pomeranian Grenadiers, overtowers possible combatants and awes them; she masses army divisions as others do battalions, and boasts her immense resources.

The strongest curb to expansion of the empire by any military operations which are resolutely opposed by foreign powers, is supplied by the unrest in Russia itself. In a well-known publication, "Russia on the eve of the XXth Century," by "A Russian Patriot," it is pointed out that "a sudden catastrophe will precipitate most unexpectedly the process of inner discontent." In short, when the Russian army is fully employed, or beaten, the revolutionaries will find their opportunity, and this the authorities know.

The dissatisfaction in Russia is general, and the Government against which it is directed has no other way of dealing with the widespread discontent than repressing its manifestation. Each successive act of oppression weakens the state and, as indicated by the often recurring student riots, labour strikes, and peasant risings, increases the danger of an organised open revolt.

In Russia the wealthy class — the class content with things as they are — is about 8 per cent. only of the total population,

but of these not all side with the Government in every case, and even of the 5 per cent. constituting the military caste there are secret sympathisers with the people. Nor is this surprising, seeing that if only a few peasants attempt to form a book club, or circulating library, they are forbidden to do so, and, when a kindly disposed lady institutes a *crèche* for the babies of women working in the neighbouring factories, she is ordered to desist from "harbouring an illegal assembly of infants." No doubt such intolerance results from the stupidity of some minor official, but in every case it is the Government which is blamed by the people.

Then the peasants, who in European Russia form more than 85 per cent. of the population, look to the Government for everything, and, when tired of the hardships of their never very easy lives, call upon the State to better their lot. The students may be drafted into the army or deported to Siberia, the peasants imprisoned, flogged, or shot down, but this merely incenses their fellows the more, and the justice of their cause is now believed in by the common soldiers who enter the army as conscripts.

It is assumed that there is no cohesion among the malcontents, and hence the safety of the State is assured, but it is possible, and even probable, that there may be a coalition *ad hoc* on the simple issue of an attack upon officialdom.

Another unwarranted belief is that the Russian Church has its members under control, and not only welds the heterogeneous elements constituting Russia into a nation, but can influence the Pravoslavs in all such matters as obedience to authority and to their Tsar. The Orthodox are not in a large majority, are fewer certainly than 62 per cent. of the total population, and so far as male citizens are concerned the general influence of the Church is very small. The dissenters are 11 per cent. of the population; each member is more

religious than the average Orthodox peasant, and if those of certain non-combative sects could not actively side with the people in the event of a general rising, all undoubtedly would be warm sympathisers with the object of the movement if not of the means for attaining it. Next in numerical importance are the Roman Catholics, between whom and the Orthodox there is no love lost; moreover, most of the Roman Catholics are Poles, and with the Poles the spirit of nationality is still active and the desire for independence a strong general impulse.

The Mahommedans number not fewer than eight millions; to them orthodoxy and dissent are one. Those in the army would undoubtedly obey their officers, and, through the love they have for fighting, quell any rising of peasants, students, citizens, or political malcontents. Sedition the State has to fear here; for, assuming that the time were ripe and the rising general, the Mahommedans in the army or out of it would fight for their own hand, hoping to get rid of the Russian yoke.

The Lutherans and Protestants, some five millions, chiefly in the Baltic provinces and Finland, are certainly unfriendly to the Russian State, which during recent years has done much to embitter them. Armenians and pagans are a negligible quantity, but it must be remembered that from amongst them and the dissenters from the Orthodox Church most of the proselytes are gained. During the ten years prior to 1898 fewer than 100 Armenians were converted yearly, but in that year the number suddenly rose to nearly 3000, and has continued — for special reasons. Seeing that in ten years the Orthodox Church claims to have made nearly 200,000 converts, perhaps Russian Pravoslavism is not so strong throughout the empire as usually estimated.

It is ridiculous to suppose that these various elements in

Russia are united in a common faith, in love of the Tsar, or even common patriotism; they are held together by armed force. Of the various struggles proceeding, that between the Russian State and Jewry is one of the most interesting.

The position of the five million Jews in Russia is peculiar. They do not enjoy the same limited rights as other citizens, and successive restrictions have crippled their activities in almost every walk of life they attempt to utilise. They are required to serve in the army, but may not receive commission rank; they must reside in certain districts only; they may not attend the universities save within certain limits as to the proportion of Jew to Pravoslav students; they are shut out of the liberal professions in like manner, and hampered in many ways. This differential treatment is due to the fact that the greater ability of the Jew makes him the master of the Russian, and the peasant particularly must be protected from the Jew money-lender, the astute merchant, the too energetic worker. By a heavy handicap the State favours the Slav, still the Jew proves to be the winner in life's game of money-getting.

As a political factor the Jew is of more importance than the Pole, the Mahommedan, or any sectarian in Russia, for behind the humble Israelite within the pale stands the international Jew financier, who, since Russia adopted the gold standard, has held the worldly fortune of all the Russias in the hollow of his hand.

More imperatively than any country Russia needs outside capital, not only for the extension and development of the immense State enterprises, but a continuous influx of money for the exploitation of private properties. Russia has tried repeatedly to borrow, offering ample security and fair interest, but has been unsuccessful. She could obtain the money she wants on terms she will not accept, for they are political, not financial.

The inner history of State loans is not generally made known to the public, and it is unlikely that time will reveal all details of the futile attempts made by Russia within the past few years, but it is no secret that the large international bankers have decided upon a bear movement with regard to any fresh Russian loan, and that their relations with the exchange bankers throughout the world are such that collectively they can entail a substantial monetary loss upon any one subscribing to a Russian loan as a speculation. Russia does not know how to appeal to the foreign private investor.

Further than this the Jewish influence is felt with respect to certain private undertakings, in so far as to render the professional company promoters and underwriters unwilling to negotiate without first obtaining the assent of the Jew houses interested in similar Russian properties; as, for instance, the petroleum industry of Baku, which is for all practical purposes controlled by Jewish capital.

The struggle will not be decided quickly; time promises the advantage to both parties. If the State, either from pecuniary stress or political necessity, has to yield, the Russian Jews will receive the same rights as other Russian subjects, and the future of the Russian Empire will no longer be wholly in the hands of the Slavs. The cry of Russia for the Russians must then be dropped, and Pravoslavism will decay. If the State does not yield, the faculty the Jews possess for organisation will be used, and the State confronted with something in the nature of a national demand for a constitution and greater individual freedom. If this is refused, it will be met not by an armed rising but by a sullen refusal to comply with State requirements, rendering local rule inoperative. Then the State may resort to force, when the opportunity of Russia's foreign enemies will come. China, Japan, Mongolia, and Turkestan may be able to put back

the Russian landmarks in Asia; and the power of Russia be broken forever.

Truly, the realisation of that idealistic, or practical, manifest destiny of Russia to absorb even Asia, requires most cautious direction. The huge empire, built up patiently through the centuries may be shattered in a few short days, and of the fragments many small self-governing states emerge — a consummation which however much desired now by foreign nations would be disastrous to the welfare of the Russian people.

The domestic policy of Russia, the relations existing between the State and Russian subjects, are really of little concern to foreigners except as a study. The well-meant, yet always injudicious and too frequent interference of foreigners with internal affairs is to be deplored. It is usually impotent and invariably resented. Poles, Finns, and Russians must themselves strive for such freedom as they need, until they secure it. Those foreigners who are real well-wishers of Russian subjects will render them the best service by endeavouring to improve the relations between the Russian State and their own Government. This they can do to the best advantage by increasing the general intercourse. Russia ought not to be less known by outsiders than is any other foreign country. To know the Russian is to like him. He is the last man with whom one would wish to be at war, and, as acquaintance ripens, all dread of him vanishes. In character he is neither rapacious nor cruel; and the policy of his Government if viewed from his standpoint is defensible. It may not be altogether contrary to the general good of humanity, and the real question at issue is: how far may Russia's practical, material policy be extended without injury to Anglo-Saxondom?

It is indisputable that Russia intends to extend her

dominion wherever she can; it is as certain that the freedom-loving Anglo-Saxon will be among the last ever to become Russified. Perhaps before the apparently inevitable great war is commenced one nation or the other will have already succumbed. As long as both exist, the continuous policy of extension will bring the two nations nearer together, nearer to a final fight for the world supremacy. That date may be deferred for generations by successful diplomacy; by common accord concerning the treatment of questions of less than vital interest to either side. The centre of friction now is the Far East. Russia has extended as part of her general policy and has come into contact, perhaps unwittingly, with British interests. It is unlikely that she will draw back; that England, or any other nation, will force her back, yet we simply cannot afford to lose the Chinese market. Its importance is far greater than generally supposed, the Board of Trade returns merely indicate its volume, but in fact the right to trade there on most-favoured nation terms is a matter vital to us, one to be as stubbornly contested as any other question of empire. To relinquish the Chinese market is no more to be thought of than losing the Colonies, abandoning South Africa, retiring from Egypt, or forfeiting India. The British Ministry, dull though it be, has comprehended that one fact. With characteristic feebleness it champions the *status quo*, and in order to support that, forms an alliance with Japan. Events will prove that this is insufficient, and that to champion the *status quo* is as futile as it is inglorious. China is going to change, according to western ideas is going to progress, or at least to develop. The movements will be rapid and the transformation thorough, whatever part England may play in effecting or delaying the conversion.

The Anglo-Japanese treaty is opposed to Russia's pretensions, to her work. It is disliked by the Russian Government

RUSSIAN CATHEDRAL CHURCH, KHARBIN

MANTZU VILLAGE, EAST MANCHURIA

CHAPTER XXI

CONCLUSIONS

ABOUT the vast and already overgrown Russian Empire in Asia Europeans really know but little, and we English probably less than most. It seems incredible that with our boasted enterprise and world-wide commercial connections we have allowed territory nearly thrice the size of Europe to be without a resident official representative, or even a newspaper correspondent; that we do not follow the lead of European powers in having a commercial agent at Vladivostok when even Belgium can maintain its commissioner at that distant port, nine-tenths of whose casual shipping is British. We have no one to tell Canadian wheat growers that nearly a hundred million pounds of American flour has been imported annually, or to suggest to Australian shippers that canned goods and frozen meat would find a market; where — simply because there is no one to report what is happening — we permit trade in manufactures to drift from American to German hands without making a bid for it. The denizens of Downing Street must surely have forgotten the place since the Russians obliterated Port May and made it Queen of the East. Or is it that Britain will not afford what Norway possesses? If that be so, let it be known that the profit on orders for goods which might have been sent to Britain from Irkutsk only last year, would more than have maintained a Vice-Consulate there for a

CONSTRUCTION TRAIN ON THE EASTERN CHINESE RAILWAY

decade. Should all the blame of a neglected market be saddled upon the lethargic British manufacturer when the *Board of Trade Journal* for its information is reduced to publishing excerpts from foreign consular reports?

In Greater Russia there is trade to be had, not perhaps for the asking, but a market to be won, and in order to secure it the appointment of official representatives is imperative. Nor must the consul be of that type too common in Russia, the retired British army officer, who knows little of commerce and is certainly not *persona grata* among Russians. They, not unnaturally, regard him rather as a political spy than a man appointed *bona fide* to foster trade between their country and Great Britain. Far better let the consul with his foreign office bumptiousness and gold-laced uniform remain unknown in Siberia, and send only commercial agents who, east of Baikal certainly, should be either Canadians or Australians thoroughly conversant with the produce and trade of their native land.

Dependent as Great Britain now is for information upon the generosity of the private traveller, it seems desirable that the attitude of His Majesty's representatives abroad towards this class of person should be considerably modified. He ought to be welcomed, to be aided, to be counselled, and furnished willingly with such information respecting the country he proposes to visit, and the work upon which he will engage, as the archives of the office can produce. The impression the British Embassy at St. Petersburg succeeds in conveying is that it would be more satisfactory generally if Englishmen did not attempt to see what may be seen of the Russian Empire; that permission to visit parts of Greater Russia can indeed be asked for, but are generally refused, and that if the visitor wishes to see or do anything there, it depends upon his own ability, not on the power of His

Majesty's representatives to be of assistance towards that end. Instead, if his application be legitimate, no refusal should be accepted. In Russia the foreigner can accomplish much by polite insistence. At Kharbin in the heart of Manchuria the Hamburg firm of Kunst and Albers had built a brick store and stocked it, when as yet the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg could not obtain permission for an Englishman to visit the place even. No English Consul may be aware of the fact, or of the means by which it was accomplished, but Mr. Datan, the official representative of Germany at the port of Vladivostok, knows certainly.

The great endeavours Russia is making to develop its Asian possessions show that British methods are inadequate with modern conditions. It is no longer enough to keep the ring and allow with unconcern all comers to struggle with each other therein. Against a mighty state, the individual or the private corporation has no chance of success in an open market. No British trader, no American Trust, can vanquish the Russian State even in Manchuria. The Russian policy is correctly stated in a recent issue of the *Novoe Vremya:*

"After we have constructed the Chinese Eastern railway we cannot play the part of an unconcerned spectator towards the future fate of this railway. It has cost us many millions. If the Manchurian railway is to serve the development of Russian trade we must restrict the commercial freedom of other nations. The same applies to the question of mining rights. The necessity of safeguarding the interests of the Manchurian railway compels us to keep a watchful eye on the Shan-hai-kuan and Newchwang line. If this line were to be carried across the Liao river and connected with the South Manchurian line, traffic would be deflected from the province of Pe-chi-li to Shan-hai-kuan, and the southern part of our railway, together with Port Arthur and Dalny, would

lose in importance. This is the reason why we cannot allow the Newchwang railway to cross the Liao. Moreover, this railway runs to the north of the Great Wall; that is to say, through our exclusive sphere of interest. If we neglect to see that the railway remains absolutely Chinese, the danger arises that British and Japanese influence may be established in Southern Manchuria — in territory exploited by our railway."

This policy will be followed. Russian industries will be favoured by carrying Russian goods at a preferential tariff, by admitting them duty free into Chinese territory through the Russian port of Dalny, thus diverting trade from its economical into Russian channels. That is a real danger at present threatening the open door, a means of subverting Chinese revenues which, as guarantor of the integrity of China, the irony of events may compel Free Trading Great Britain to stop.

The point has already been raised, and the issue is likely to prove how far the proposed guarantee of the integrity of China is genuine. Newchwang is a treaty-port and goods imported there should pay the Chinese customs duties. In the spring of 1902 Russia passed through to Newchwang, not only Russian wares but some thousands of bales of American, Indian, and British cotton goods which had been brought into the country duty free by way of Port Arthur — in short, by this act Russia suspended the collection of dues at a Chinese treaty-port, and will continue to do so, in order to promote trade in its own ports on the Quan-Tung peninsula. If this is prohibited at Newchwang, Russia will still forward goods duty free to inland towns, whence they will be conveyed to other parts of China. Again, Russian goods conveyed by the Siberian railway do not pay duty on entering Manchuria, for there is no Chinese customs station at the frontier, or on the route, and it is unlikely that Russia will

permit Sir Robert Hart an establishment on their railway, or within their sphere of influence, nor will they allow the Chinese Imperial authorities to restrict in any way the trade with China which Russia has made, and is making, such enormous pecuniary sacrifices to secure.

British and American traders in their own defence will struggle for a share of the market open to them by the Russian free ports; more especially will this be the case if the Chinese import tariff is raised as is proposed. If they succeed the Chinese revenues will be very appreciably lessened, and Russian ports will thrive at the expense of the established treaty-ports. If they fail, the trade of China is lost to Great Britain and the United States. In either event Russia wins — as win it must as long as it has not only a naval base but an immense trading port on the Quan-Tung peninsula. Germany in Kiao-Chiaou may also be expected in defence of its trading interests to do as Russia is doing, and pass goods into China duty free by the ports it controls. Great Britain will not do so within her sphere of influence, for Great Britain counts it almost a political sin to give its manufacturers the slightest advantage over their foreign competitors, and sometimes neglects to get them even equal facilities for trading.

The subject bristles with difficulties. If Russia is determined to break through the Chinese tariff wall the *status quo* in China certainly cannot be maintained, without first turning Russia out of the Feng-Tien province, if not out of Manchuria. The existing import duties are not collected to benefit the Chinese population, but to ensure the payment of the interest to the bondholders of the Chinese 6 per cent. foreign loan. British manufacturers and traders may rightly object to their goods being subject to duty as long as Russian goods escape it. If they refuse to pay, can free traders withhold their sympathy and support? Or is Great Britain, as guarantor of the

integrity of China, going to force British subjects to pay the duty and allow the Russians to go free? Or is Russia to be induced, or forced, too? And for what purpose? In order to make the Chinese submit to the imposition of import duties, when Russia is attempting to give them free trade. Would that be an attitude popular in China, or in England?

Suppose that the Russian free-port competition is so great that the Chinese treaty-ports have also to admit goods duty free, then the necessary revenue must be raised in other ways, ways which will entail upon the powers guaranteeing the integrity of China further interference in the administration of Chinese internal affairs — a matter in which other foreign powers may feel themselves concerned.

An arrangement with Russia is imperative if peace is to be maintained; if it cannot be effected, a bold attack should be made upon the markets of Northern Asia through China. Goods should be admitted free, railways should be built, and Central Asia opened up by better through communications between Mongolia and Manchuria from the Chinese coast; particularly the development of the Yang-tse-Kiang valley should be hastened and railway communication with Burma established before France and Russia unite their Asian railways and cut off the upper Yangtse from communication with both east and west. The British Government, being composed of men who are not traders, cannot be made to comprehend the importance of these commercial matters. For the battles won on the playing-fields of Eton Britons pay dearly by the foreign markets lost in her class-rooms.

Nowadays an empire is neither won nor held by signing papers, and the making of treaties is only the way in which nations mark time, but Great Britain is slow to learn new methods, and still regards a document much as an African aborigine does his fetich. The Russians give European states-

men treaties to play with, as they would give glass beads to savages who want them. Which does the world count of greater value, a paper signed with honour in Berlin or a railway built by labour from the sea to Uganda? What is the treaty of Berlin? What the Bulwer-Clayton Agreement, and the Chinese railway concessions? So much waste paper. Batum is not a free port; Great Britain has no fortress in Nicaragua, nor is the first sod turned of the railways in the Yang-tse-Kiang valleys. Statesmanship which results in such a harvest is unfitted to the century, so the Anglo-Japanese alliance must be appraised simply by what it is the means of actually and materially accomplishing.

The wars of the future will be for markets; they will be wars of necessity, or rather, perhaps, prompted by the hope of material gain. Many of them will be fought with other weapons than cannon and money. Established commerce, a firm hold of trade routes, preponderance at a trading post, effective occupation of a produce exchange — in the struggle for markets these will be points of vantage worth more than battalions, and a short railway may be of greater value than a fleet of battleships.

Among ambassadors the real statesmen to-day are not those who idle away their days in social frivolities awaiting the occasion for a grand *coup*, the accomplishment of which may pass their illustrious names down through the next few ages, but those who do the everyday work nearest to hand, who strengthen the commercial ties connecting their native land with that of the country to which they are sent. If trade falls away, if the commercial colony which clusters around every embassy dwindles and becomes impoverished, then the Ambassador may consider his tenure of office has been a failure, a loss to the country he represents, whose influence in the land has diminished.

KHABAROVSK, THE RUSSIAN CAPITAL OF THE EAST

This is not the standard by which Great Britain has been accustomed to gauge her public servants, but it is the one by which the trading community measures success.

Imperial autocratic Russia is more keenly alive to the requirements of her people and more in harmony with the commercial spirit of the age than is free, aristocratic Britain, governed by fine gentlemen.

The Russian State is democratic and socialistic in act; it will sacrifice much in order to afford the people facilities for increasing their material wealth; it will start, foster, and cherish trade, and itself regulate commerce in commodities it believes to be harmful to the general public. It is easy to accuse the State of greed, and say that it studies only its own monetary interests. Had it no conscience, a revenue would be derived from the sale of patent medicines. The simple Russian peasants are protected from quack remedies on which educated Britons, and still more enlightened Americans, waste millions annually. But when it comes to building a railway or financing an enterprise likely to be of general benefit, the Russian State does not stop to consider in what proportion classes and masses will benefit individually. Great Britain seems afraid to attempt any venture for the general good, if by so doing any one class may gain a somewhat larger percentage of profit than any other. Even at home it expects private companies to make railways and run trains where there is no population, in order to create a district; and abroad it would have British individual enterprise engage and vanquish not only great corporations, but a democratic trading empire, competing actively and intent, no matter at what cost, to triumph over the Briton.

Russia hopes to oust the Briton from China, and in obtaining Port Arthur effected the key-move of the political game European powers were playing in the Far East. All counter

moves subsequently have failed not only to nullify, but even to diminish the advantage Russia thereby secured, and the abandonment of the port by any power interested in maintaining the integrity of China was worse than a blunder — in statecraft it was nothing short of a crime. All that Russia has to do immediately, is to establish herself firmly in the Quan-Tung peninsula, then, as and when opportunities occur, she can squeeze Korea between that centre and Vladivostok, or put pressure on Pekin by a simultaneous advance from east and west.

As though Britain had not favoured Russia enough, in 1899 she made an agreement by which (Art. I.) "Great Britain engages not to seek for her own account, or on behalf of British subjects or of others, any railway concessions to the north of the Great Wall of China, and not to obstruct, directly or indirectly, applications for railway concessions in that district supported by the Russian Government," and apparently ignores the menace to Pekin which the extension of Russian railways constitutes.

England — the England of the Far East — knew of the intended Russian advance in Manchuria; it was published years ago, and again and again representations on the subject have been made without avail from the traders in the east to their rulers in the west; rulers whose policy apparently is based on the unexpected always happening. Known, too, was the intention of France to share with Russia dominion of the east. It may not be so generally known, at least by the British public, that Japan, tired of the British policy of drift and exasperated at the continuous successes and encroachments of Russia, practically forced its alliance upon the British Government, threatening if its terms were refused to throw in its lot with Russia and accept from her what she could succeed in extracting.

The alliance is meant by Great Britain to protect her trading interests in the Yang-tse-Kiang valley; by Japan to safeguard Korea.

Russia and France conjointly can, and probably soon will, try its strength. Throughout Mongolia Russian influence is supreme. Already Russia is taking the place weak, faltering China occupied in Tibet. From Tibet a rising in China can be started and secretly encouraged when needful. Or it may be that the present rebellion in Yunnan originated there, and will extend throughout China. France may send troops into the province to restore order and so drive the insurrectionaries to the valley of the Yang-tse-Kiang; there England and Japan may succeed in restoring order. In the meantime Russia, to protect her increasing interests, will occupy the Pekin province if not the capital itself.

When Pekin is once in Russian hands the whole empire of China will break up; European powers and the United States may pacify their open market as best they can. Russia at least will be satisfied, for a time, with the share she will have secured.

Russia's greatest danger is from China herself. With a progressive China threatening her borders she will be forced to act upon the defensive. Here again Great Britain has signed away power by the fatuous Arms Act — drafted to allow Japan, Belgium, and the United States of America to rearm the Chinese nation if so disposed. Russia will reply by arming the Mongols, in whom they have men, according to the reports of the officers who have fought in Manchuria, almost equal when well equipped and officered to the Cossack cavalry.

Russia has acquired an enormous dominion in Asia, which she wishes both to extend and consolidate. These territories will not be opened to settlement by Europeans, but peopled

by Russian subjects for whom the commerce and industries of these regions will also be reserved. The Russian railways in Eastern Asia are intended primarily to serve a political purpose, and until Russia's military dispositions are completed there, the lines will not be opened to general traffic. Probably before that happens the world will be asked to accept Russia's views and Russian rule in the Far East — to prevail against her the various industrial powers interested in the trade of the Chinese Empire must unite, and be always as ready as Russia is to maintain their rights by force of arms.

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